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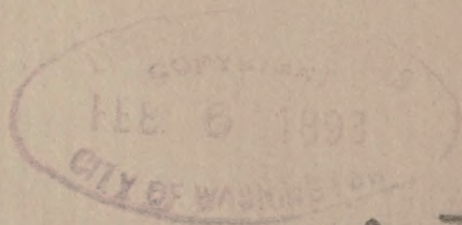
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CHAPTER I.

THE WOMAN WHO WOULD DARE.

Night has just settled over the city and harbor of Valparaiso, the greatest seaport of the Chilian coast—an October night—when a boat from the Chilian war vessel draws up alongside the landing known as the Mole.

One man only springs out, and his actions bespeak the soldier rather than the sailor. Chili, the stanchest republic of South America, has recently been racked in the throes of civil war, and the beaten government leader, Balmaceda, has fled over the mountains. His fate is still uncertain, and a close watch is kept up in all seaport towns for the fugitive president, who is believed to carry with him a wonderful treasure in precious gems.

"*Buenos noche*, Senor Colonel," sings out the Chilian officer in the stern-sheets of the boat.

The man on shore responds—his voice and intonation betray his nationality—Colonel Leon Garcia

has played a part in the late war, and by rare good luck chances to be on the winning side when it terminates.

Swinging on his heel, he passes into the city, aiming directly for a certain quarter, as though he has an engagement. Valparaiso at this hour is a noisy place, for a number of war vessels, besides trading steamers and ships are in the harbor, and hundreds of sailors on shore-leave make things lively. Among others may be seen a number of Yankee tars from the cruiser *Baltimore*, now in port.

Colonel Garcia frowns whenever he sights one of Uncle Sam's blue-jackets, for, like the majority of his countrymen, he has conceived an intense hatred for all Yankees, and puffed up with the recent victories, believes valiant Chili with her powerful men-of-war can even lay the United States under tribute.

At the corner of the lighted Plaza Heelright he comes to a stop—a figure advances out of the shadow to greet him, a figure of magnificent build, colossal in size, and possessing the unmistakable voice of a Briton. There are many Englishmen in Chili, where the money from the tight little island across the sea controls most of the industries—this is the main cause for Chilian hostility to Americans—British interests are endangered by Yankee push, and jealousy stirs up bad blood.

"Colonel, you are a little late," remarks the Briton, somewhat peevishly.

"Bah! what does it matter—*he* will not be back for hours. We have cooked his goose, and the game is in our hands, milord," returns the soldier, as if proud of his own work—this Chilian colonel is a fire-eater, a dare-devil, in his own estimation, though if his soldiers were closely interrogated they

would tell how he sheltered himself behind a tree in one engagement, and at the closing battle of Placilla a wrecked stone house gave him security, from which he waved his sword frantically, urging his men to deeds of valor.

"Pardon me if I appear less sanguine than yourself—I've had some dealings with this Yankee doctor—he is in league with the nitrate king, Colonel North, has outwitted the combine that plotted his ruin, and bids fair to carry out the project that brought him to Chili at this time. By Jove! I shall not be satisfied until I know the whole business has been accomplished."

"You surprise me, Lord Rackett; I thought you were invincible; a born athlete; a British prize boxer who had never met his match."

"Wait until you meet Doctor Jack, my dear colonel. I have seen some of his work, and I respect as much as I hate the Yankee. Some day we will settle our question at close quarters, but for the present I am content to work in the dark against him."

"Pardon again—you adore—his wife!"

"My dear colonel, I worshiped her before she ever knew such a man existed as Jack Evans. Then I lost her—was taken with the fever at Paris—took me six months to recuperate."

"*Vaya, hombre*, and she——"

"By Jove! was Doctor Jack's wife when I saw her again. I was furious, meant to challenge him—thought better of it and laid low to await the turn of the tide that comes to every man who has patience. It has taken several years, but fortune has finally given me the chance I asked. He comes to Chili on a secret mission—to save the fortune he

has invested here—Avis accompanies him against his wishes, for she is brave, devoted. I am already here; Englishmen are in favor with the Chilians, while Americans are hated. I am in luck. I lay my plans, and here in old Valparaiso Doctor Jack will meet his Waterloo.”

“*Carramba!* what a mind for scheming. I am proud to serve you, to be your ally. But what do I inhale—that abominable smoke—see, it proceeds from that figure hugging yonder post within ear-shot. We may be overheard.”

“Bah! it is the odor of a wretched cigarette—some Chilian lad lounging in the plaza; we talk in English; it is Greek to him, never fear. Are you ready for our little programme?”

“You mean our argument under the lady’s window at the *fonda*—yes, I have it in my mind, and will carry my part. Experience has taught me that all women are jealous, and I must believe Doctor Jack’s wife is no exception to the general rule.”

“Ah,” says the Briton, with a chuckle, “she has good reason for jealousy; she loves this man; I will cause her first to hate him.”

“And then?”

“By Jove! I shall marry his widow in the end. Trust me, my boy, for that.”

“Do we go now?”

“At once, colonel. Remember, I shall appear very angry; an English gentleman is easily aroused by such miserable treachery on the part of a contemptible husband.”

“Of course—it is natural. You say she sits much at her open window?”

“Yes, for her husband has had to be away most of the time, and owing to the excited state of the

populace since the capture of the city he does not wish her abroad unattended."

"Take my arm, milord. Now we shall proceed to the *fonda*."

As the two saunter across the plaza, after lighting cigars, the small figure that has been hugging the post near by, arises, and instead of a Chilian youth proves to be a little man sporting a pair of very agonizing though diminutive Dundreary whiskers, a checkered suit, and a tremendous cane, with an ape's head for a handle, which the owner sucks whenever he has occasion for deep thought.

"Bless my soul, but this is very odd. I cawn't quite understand it, you know. Something told me Lord Rackett was up to mischief, so I kept out of his sight and followed him here. One thing I've learned that pleases me—they're in Valparaiso—I'll soon be able to give Jack the message I've carried over the sea. By Jove! I must patter after this pair of ducks, you know, and see what they mean to do. Wretched cigarette—abominable odor—I'll wipe out the insult in gore, pon onah, I will."

Thereupon the little man's slender legs fairly fly as he hastens to overtake those whose conversation a peculiar freak of fortune has allowed him to hear.

The hotel looms up—quite a fair-looking building for Valparaiso. Already the pair ahead seem to have opened up a warm discussion—men generally raise their voices when they become heated in argument—and as seems quite natural, they come to a pause close to the walls of the *fonda*, as a hotel is known in all Spanish countries.

Not more than ten feet above the sidewalk there is an open window; through this a soft light escapes as though a lamp were turned low; and as

the voices of the men sound upon the night air, the flutter of a white shawl or some similar feminine garment might be noticed in this quarter.

"I say it is a burning shame, colonel; I'm a single man myself, but I have no patience with a scoundrel who would deceive his wife, leave her at some hotel, and go off to flirt with a pretty girl who has caught his eye."

"Bah! they're pretty much alike, milord, these benedicts; I've no doubt that Senor Evans' wife believes him to be perfection. Men are deceivers ever, you know," laughs the Chilian.

"Jove! I've a notion to find out where his wife is and tell her of his treachery; yes, prove it, if need be, by taking her to see him in the company of the lovely Senorita Marilla de los Vegas."

"*Cospita!* man, she would not go."

"Then I shall horsewhip him on the plaza. I tell you I once knew this lady and worshiped her, Colonel Garcia, and my honest British blood boils at her husband's cowardly act."

"Go slow, my impetuous British lion. I have heard of this Yankee, and Doctor Jack has the reputation of one who fears neither man nor devil. You are brave, but even that might not save you in an encounter."

"An English gentleman never lets such a thought confound him. Win or lose, it would make no difference; in the service of a lady whom he respects he would risk his life. You are sure you saw him with the beautiful and wealthy senorita who came so near trapping Balmaceda before his secret flight?"

"I will stake my life on it—he kissed her hand and looked the lover. I can hardly blame the Yankee, *por Dios*, for half the men in all Valparaiso

would wade through fire and flood at the nod of her pretty head."

"Ah! I see, colonel, you, too, are in love."

"*Hombre*, I admit the soft impeachment. When I saw this accursed Yankee find favor in her eyes, and receive the looks of love that I would give my right hand to have bestowed upon my humble self, I stamped his face on my brain, and his name when she uttered it."

How fiercely the dashing Chilian says this, as though he means every word.

"Tell me what she said."

"All I heard, and it was enough to give me a heart-flutter, too, was, 'To the death, Doctor Jack—she shall not come between.'"

"Jove! quite enough, I declare."

"What was that—I thought I heard a low cry."

"Nonsense, man, there is so much confusion around Valparaiso now, with sailors swarming the streets and soldiers from our victorious army marching in squads, that all manner of sounds may strike the ear. Let's find a quiet nook in a neighboring *calle*, where we can talk this thing over and arrange our plan. By Jove! it's a blasted shame. An Englishman cawn't stand by and see a thing like this done. Doctor Jack has got to give up his new idol——"

"Or I shall make his wife a widow soon," grates the fire-eating colonel.

Then, arm-in-arm, the two saunter on, as though their halt has been a mere accident.

In the window above a feminine figure is crouched—every word has reached the ears of that faithful wife, but beyond the one low, involuntary cry that escaped her at the cruel words repeated by the

heartless Chilian soldier of fortune, she has given no evidence that the conversation thus accidentally held in front of the Valparaiso *fonda*, and under her window, is of a character to sear itself with letters of fire upon her brain.

One minute later the light flashes up in the apartments occupied by the rich American, Doctor Evans, and his charming wife.

Sixty seconds more, and there sounds a sudden knock upon the hall door.

"Enter," calls the voice of the lady, in Spanish, but she does not turn her head nor desist in her search through the trunk for something.

Through the door-way steps the little man we have seen upon the plaza; the bright light reveals the wonderful pattern of his garments, and his generally dudish but ridiculous attire, even to the insignificant little Dundreary appendages on either side of his face, which countenance it must be confessed usually boasts of a dull, vacant expression, possibly studied.

As this specimen of the Anglomania craze, in New York, stands there, one hand held out toward Doctor Jack's wife in greeting, the other feebly caressing the left tuft of yellow down upon his off cheek, while his cane is tucked under his arm, the woman at the trunk, who has tossed all manner of garments aside in her excited search, gives utterance to a cry:

"I have found it, and now to wring a confession from the lips of the scoundrel."

She turns as she speaks.

"By Jove! a revolver it is. Good gwacious, Avis, don't you wecognize me—duse take these whiskers! It's me—your own cousin——"

"Larry!"

The revolver drops upon the floor, luckily without exploding, and in another minute the small man finds himself actually embraced by another fellow's wife.

"Thank God you are here, just when I need you most, cousin. I am in a cruel position, and without a soul in this city to help me," she cries, as she blushing releases her small relative and sinks into a chair.

Then she rapidly repeats what has been said beneath her window.

"I know—the air is full of danger to you and yours in Valparaiso. I must see Jack as soon as possible; I bring him a message of importance from Quito—hunted for you in Santiago, chased you to this beastly place. But you have your hat on—what did you intend doing—make your husband confess?" in a joking sort of way.

Her blue eyes snap sparks of fire:

"If you had not come, Cousin Larry, in five minutes some one would have been hunting for a Colonel Leon Garcia, and before the hour that miserable Chilean officer would be on his knees, looking into the muzzle of this pretty toy, and confessing the truth to Doctor Jack's wife."

CHAPTER II.

YANKEE MUSCLE IN A VALPARAISO CALLE.

At just the time the boat from the Chilian gun-boat lands alongside the Mole, a man leaves the *fonda* that Valparaiso is proud of, and heads into the city proper.

A visitor from one of the capitals of Europe or the States might turn up his nose at the idea of Valparaiso being called a great city, for there are lacking many of the elements that enterprise has made common in the civilized world, but it should be taken into consideration that Chili is in reality a Spanish country, though the widest awake of all our South American neighbors, and that they do not take as readily to the wonderful advances of the age as some other nations. Besides, Chili has just suffered the agonies of a terrible civil war, and emerges with an added luster to her diadem; all she wants now is a little time to recover, and then watch her advance with giant strides.

Thus it may be accounted for that instead of flashing electric lights, such as we are accustomed to seeing even in most of our small towns along the railroads, Valparaiso, recently the seat of battle, is dimly lighted with flaring gas-lamps.

Doctor Jack thinks little of this as he leaves the hotel and strikes for the center of the city; he has delved into many a quaint city of Europe, and in his travels has seen so much that is odd and belongs to a past age that with a traveler's experience his

philosophy is to take all things as he finds them, and do the best possible.

Once he turns, to wave his handkerchief to the figure in the window of the hotel and receive an answering salute.

"God bless the dear girl," mutters Doctor Jack; "it's a beastly shame that she should be compelled to endure what has come upon us in this war-racked country, but Avis would not allow me to sail alone, and everything depended on my coming. Well, it looks as though the biggest success of my life had attended me, and in a couple of days more we'll take the steamer, sail for California, and put in the winter on our lovely place near Monterey."

"I am more than curious to know what the writer of this note has to say concerning the secret mission that brought me to Chili—the vague hints thrown out do not satisfy me. It may be he has news of importance to communicate, or on the other hand this little business may turn out—a trap. Doctor Jack comes prepared with gold to buy this secret if it is worthy of a price, and with cold lead to meet treachery."

Thus meditating, the American traverses a narrow *calle* where the draught of sea air causes the lights to flare, and fantastic shadows to creep over the pavements like weird phantoms.

Valparaiso, like all seaports, always has its quota of rough characters, and at this particular time is boiling over with elements succeeding the late war—soldier adventurers spending the spoils they have picked up, sailors deserting their ships, and numerous rogues from the country flocking to the scene of Balmaceda's overthrow, as though expecting to find

the treasure of the late government upon the streets.

Doctor Jack seeks no quarrel, though ever ready to defend himself against all comers. He knows the antipathy that exists in the Chilian mind at present against Americans, and how quick these natives are to spot a Yankee on sight—hence, he pulls the soft hat he wears farther over his eyes as he pushes along the dismal looking *calle*.

Doctor Jack can talk Spanish fairly well, and if asked a question may even reply in a tone that would cause no suspicion to arise concerning his right to the streets of Valparaiso. Better a little deception of this sort than a silly outbreak that must betray his identity and cause a small riot in the city.

His residence in the country has been such as to make it profitable for him to imitate the natives in the matter of dress and habits as much as possible. The Chilians do not differ greatly from our own methods—the habiliments of a gentleman are much the same as we see every day, but in a few things they have their own oddities, and these are enough to mark a native in the street from a foreigner, just as we spot an Englishman on Broadway.

The wisdom of Doctor Jack's policy is presently made manifest. At a certain point of the *calle* two vagabonds, who wear remnants of soldiers' uniforms, though this does not prove that they have ever marched under the Chilian flag, suddenly confront the American pedestrian and demand his money.

Their appeal is not one of charity, for the outstretched hand holds something in its grasp that glitters like steel.

Now, Doctor Jack has never been niggardly in his dealings with the needy; his hand and pocket-book are always open to the appeals of want, but there is something in his nature that invariably protests against having the hand of a footpad thrust into his purse and seize upon the contents.

He has had the experience under the moons of various countries, and as a general rule kicked against it with all his might. Just so on the present occasion; although unwilling to create a disturbance or commit a breach of the peace in the streets of old Valparaiso, he is even more opposed to handing over his valuables to a couple of cowardly vagabonds who thus waylay him, taking advantage of the fact that at this particular moment no one else seems to be moving along the narrow, ill-lighted *calle*.

Hence, the fellow who addresses the lonely pilgrim from the *fonda* hardly finishes his demand for the coins of the realm when he is struck by a young cyclone, the revolver sent flying from his hand, and a fist brought against his head with such impetus that he finds himself lying on his back ten feet away, feebly gazing up at the few stars that peep down from the narrow lane of blue sky visible between the flat roofs above.

Doctor Jack does not forget that the impudent footpad he thus chastises has a comrade, and whirling around, he is just in time to seize this fellow's upraised arm, which brandishes aloft an ugly knife.

When those fingers of steel encircle the wrist of the Chilian desperado he feels as though he has slipped his arm by mistake into a vice, which clamps upon it with terrible force, causing a cry of anguish to burst from his lips.

With a few words in Spanish to emphasize the force of his action, the Yankee gives a sudden fling of his arm—it is not unlike the snap of a drover's long whip. At the same moment he releases his clutch, and the footpad is sent across the *calle* with a force like that attained by a stone hurled in olden times from that primitive war engine, the catapult.

As he strikes the door of a house, which chances to be slightly ajar, he goes crashing in, and that lack of positive resistance saves him from a broken head.

The field is clear by this time, and Doctor Jack walks on as composedly as though such little occurrences are every-day matters with him, and count for but little anyway.

“Strange, how many cities I’ve been in where just such a thing occurred to me—Paris, London, Madrid, Rome, Cairo, yes, and even in far-away Constantinople and Bombay. Well, when a man takes to roaming the streets at night he’s almost certain to meet with just such an adventure, be it in Chicago or Santiago, Rio de Janeiro or Buenos Ayres. That’s done, and all the injury I’ve sustained is the fractured skin upon one of my knuckles. Reckon the chap who was the cause of it all feels worse than that after the collision.”

Saying which, he wraps his handkerchief carelessly around the hand that bleeds a little, and his thoughts go back to stormy scenes in Madrid some years ago, when he first met the woman he so proudly calls his wife, and in striving to keep his first appointment passed through just such an experience as has befallen him here in Valparaiso.

Then his mind leaves these old scenes, and once more turns to the business on hand—the strange

affair that causes him to part from his wife at the *fonda* and plunge into the amazing depths of the seaport town.

Fortunately Doctor Jack is at home here—he has threaded every one of Vaparaíso's *calles* in the day-time, and knows just where his course lies.

Presently he emerges from the narrow street, to find himself upon one better lighted, where there are many pedestrians of all classes and nations. Here gangs of sailors reel along, shouting their national airs, for under the exciting circumstances the *alquazils* are prone to wink at any ordinary disturbance of the peace. Valparaíso contains so many rough elements, and is in such a prime condition for a riot that the cautious *Intendente*, or chief of police, has issued orders to his men to wink at small disorders.

Along this thoroughfare the American strides for some ten minutes—then he stops to look around him, as if a little doubtful.

“Passed the *calle*, I reckon—anyhow, I don't remember seeing yonder barracks the time I came out of that same street and turned in the quarter I've just come from. Let me go back and see—here's a street, and I honestly believe it's the one—isn't that a name rudely painted on the glass of the blinking street-lamp? Wait until it flares up again, poor thing—ah! now we have it, *Calle los Angeles*. Bless my soul, the street of the angels—well, judging from the looks, I should say their visits in this section are few and far between.”

Standing there a minute, he takes a survey of the street; although it does not appear to be a thoroughfare, it is fairly lighted, and he remembers that quite

a number of what are called palaces in a South American city can be found in this locality.

Little does Doctor Jack imagine what strange events lie before him as he stands for a minute upon the threshold of his adventure and gazes down the *calle* with its twinkling lights.

Around him arise the various sounds that may be heard in a Spanish town of a balmy evening—much laughter, loud talking, songs from jolly spirits passing, while from over the walls of a garden near by come the tinkling notes of a mandolin as one of Chili's dark-eyed daughters thrums a national air.

Doctor Jack hears, smiles, and turning his back on all this exhilaration of sounds plunges down the *Calle los Angeles*—advancing to meet the strange adventure that awaits him.

Now, keeping to the left, he reaches a tree upon which a board has been nailed, forming a rude cross—it is known as such to every dweller in Valparaiso, and has many a time served as a rendezvous for lovers and plotters.

At the Tree of the Cross he pauses and glances around him. A figure which the body of the tree has concealed suddenly bobs into view, and a voice in Spanish says:

“Good-evening, *senor*—I have been expecting you. You are prompt.”

“Are you Jose?”

“Si, *senor*, that is my name,” bowing, and Jack notices that he is attired as servants are in the families of rich Chilians.

“You are to lead me into the presence of one who signs the name Don Rafael Ricardo.”

“That is true, *senor*.”

“Then lose no time—I am ready.”

"Follow, senior."

Doctor Jack does so willingly; he is not in the habit of engaging in wild-goose chases, but on the present occasion the letter which has been handed to him, requesting an interview, contained so many points concerning his secret mission to Chili, which he believed were only known to himself, that, acting on the advice of his wife, it is only proper that he should take some risks in order to find out what this means.

Jose looks behind him several times, as if to see whether the American follows; but he need have no fear on this score, since Jack has entered the game, determined to see it to the end.

"We arrive!" cries the man, suddenly, as he opens a heavy gate, above which hangs a red lantern.

It may be like the fly walking into the parlor of the cunning spider, but having made up his mind, the Yankee is bound to go forward, even though he may suspect all manner of evil hovers there in store for him.

So he passes the portals.

Like many houses owned by the higher classes in Santiago and Valparaiso, this building is set in the midst of a garden, and surrounded by high walls to insure privacy—indeed, these same walls might not be amiss in conjunction with a penitentiary or lunatic asylum.

They pass along a walk bordered with flowers, the perfume of which at least makes itself manifest. Then comes the house—broad steps are ascended, a noble piazza crossed, and Jose throws open the door.

"Enter!" he cries, and when Doctor Jack has done so he leads him to a room, which, though but

dimly lighted, it can be seen is elegantly furnished.

Here the American waits for an audience with the writer of the note, in the drawing-room where his deadly foe, Lord Rackett Plympton, is an honored guest—here he stands impatiently—then, desirous of seeing the paintings, turns on the gas, floods the room with light, and hearing what may be a sigh, turns—to gaze upon a sight that would thrill most men!

CHAPTER III.

"HE SWEARS TO WIN DOCTOR JACK'S WIDOW."

It is not into the frowning tubes of a revolver that Doctor Jack stares as he wheels in that Chilian parlor, but something just about as deadly to the peace of man—the fascinating eyes of a rarely beautiful woman.

She is of Spanish blood—her dusky orbs and olive complexion betray this fact. Jack has seen many lovely women in his time, but surely never one like the person who stands there and looks into his face—her gaze is peculiar, too, since it seems to fascinate, to a certain extent.

"Pardon, but I have come here to meet the writer of a note," he says.

She gives him a captivating smile.

"Yes, I know it, Senor Evans," she says, softly.

"I would see Don Rafael, if it please you, senorita."

"He is in Santiago."

"But—the letter——"

"I wrote myself, senor," again smiling.

Doctor Jack bows, accepting the situation.

"Then my interview must be with you."

"Are you sorry, Doctor Jack?"

This man is no fool—he detects the varied emotions of her voice, and knows she has entered upon the game she plays with a motive. As yet he cannot guess it—he is far from being conceited—ignores the fact of his fine physique and handsome face—

cares only for the love and devotion of one woman in all this wide world, and that—his wife.

At the same time he is a gentleman, and able to meet a lady with compliments if need be.

"Certainly not, lady, but surprised," he replies.

"At what?"

"That so much of my secret business to this land, to Chili, should be known to one of your sex."

"Ah! perhaps I have an interest in you and your fortunes," with a bewitching look.

"That, too, would be singular, lady, for, outside of my dreams, I cannot remember ever having seen, pardon me, one so lovely."

She flushes and thrills, as though his empty compliment contains the elixir of life for her.

"Then you have seen me in your dreams—you believe in souls leaving their earthly tenement during sleep and holding intercourse with other congenial company, from whom in life they may ever be separated?"

"Ah! that is something I have never bothered my head about. I simply meant that in dreams we often see faces, and are startled at meeting their *fac-similes* later. But, senorita, I have come here, braving what danger lies upon your streets after the recent disturbances"—with an involuntary glance at his hand and the bruised knuckle—"to hear what you have to say concerning my affairs. You will therefore pardon me if I ask you to proceed to business that I may return to the *fonda*."

At his words a change flashes over the lovely face of the Chilian beauty.

"You are anxious to return to your wife?" she cannot help saying.

"That is quite true, senorita," he replies, stoutly,

and then adds: "You know there has been much lawlessness in Valparaiso since the Balmaceda party was defeated, and I am uneasy about leaving her unprotected in a common hotel."

That beautiful lip curls slightly.

"Ah! Doctor Jack, do not worry yourself about your wife—there is one in Valparaiso who means to protect her—whose forte in life is caring for the widows."

"Indeed—but Avis is no widow," with a laugh.

"He means she shall be before the steamer sails on which you expect to take passage for the grand country of California."

"The duse he does!" exclaims Doctor Jack, elevating his eyebrows; "and who may this party be who appears so solicitous about my welfare and that of my wife?"

"He is an Englishman."

"Perhaps I can guess now—I had a glimpse of his figure to-day, and it reminded me of a certain man, though I have not mentioned the fact to my wife. Is it Lord Rackett Plympton?"

"He is the man. Before you met your wife he adored her—he lost the maid, and now he swears to win Doctor Jack's widow."

"Bless me, that's cool. I'll have to keep an eye out for milord. But it was not alone to tell me this you sent me that note?"

She shrugs her shoulders; rounded and perfection itself they are.

"Ah! senor, a variety of reasons caused me to seek an audience with you. I am not sorry, and I trust that you may not be. But what is the matter with your hand, senor—your handkerchief, *carissima*! it is spotted with blood."

"Your pardon, senorita—two rascals, cowards both, waylaid me in a narrow *calle*. I struck one and bruised my knuckle."

"And the other?" breathlessly, her eyes like stars.

"I tossed through a door. Bah! they were babies both—a dozen such would hardly make a man."

"Ah! senor, you are brave, and I adore a man who knows not fear. You are too valiant to fall under an assassin's knife."

"Please Heaven, I have no craving for it."

"And this English tiger must be thwarted in so far as he means to have your life."

Doctor Jack turns the drift of conversation.

"You spoke of my adventure in the nitrate regions—how knew you I had been there?"

"I am acquainted with your mission to Chili, senor—how you eluded the trap Colonel North set for you—what work you did in Santiago—how your wife was secretly carried away to the cloister, from which you rescued her without assistance, as few men could have done."

Doctor Jack fails to catch the implied compliment.

"Ah! your words give me a sudden thought—an inspiration. Was this British bull-dog in Santiago at that time?"

"Si, senor."

"Then he shall account to me for that outrage. He throws the gantlet down—Doctor Jack picks it up and swears that he will not quit the shores of Chili until this debt is canceled."

The American's eyes flash fire, and he shuts his teeth with the sudden indignation that rushes through his mind—he can forgive an insult aimed

against himself, but the man who dares to offer any indignity to Doctor Jack's wife will presently imagine he has run up against a buzz-saw or one of those typhoons that cause such terror in tropical seas.

"Senor, I am not disappointed in what I see of you—I knew you had no fear in your soul, and behold, every action proves it. You are not sorry you came here?"

"Already you have told me enough, charming lady, to doubly repay me for my trouble; and yet I do not believe you have touched upon the principal reason of my summons."

He is looking straight in her eyes as he speaks, and cannot fail to note the wave of color that suffuses face and neck.

"Perhaps it was a curiosity to see you face to face, Doctor Jack. *Quien sabe?* I had heard much of you, yes, I have looked upon you more than once when perhaps you least suspected it, and I have long had a desire to meet you personally—to do you a favor. That chance came, and I availed myself of it."

"And yet that is not all," he insists, with something in his voice that somehow influences her—here and there you run across a man of magnetic power to whom others are drawn in a singular manner—such a character is the American known as Doctor Jack, who has bitter enemies and devoted friends.

"No, not all," she echoes.

"Then tell me what more you know—give me warning of danger, news of those whom I have already outwitted, but from whose vengeful fury I will never be free as long as I remain on Chilian territory."

"You refer to the secret order of the nitrate mines. They have sent men to this city to look after you. Ah! Doctor Jack, you are too daring for your own good. These men are Chilians—they hate foreigners. They seek your death, because you plucked your venture successfully out of their hands. One thing could save you, Doctor Jack."

"Indeed—what?" he asks, scornfully, with the air of a big dog that turns to look at the curs snarling and snapping at his heels.

"Have you no relatives here?"

"Not a blessed one, *senorita*," shaking his head.

"Then it is a great pity."

"What—may I ask?"

"That—you did not marry here—a Chilian wife would save you in this case," she says.

The cat is out of the bag, and even one so dull of comprehension in such delicate matters as Jack Evans, M. D., cannot fail to see the drift of her meaning. Instead of giving him pleasure, the peculiar nature of the situation causes a feeling to come over him not unlike consternation. He is equal to a battle royal with half a dozen men in the dark streets of a foreign city, or even an engagement with a black devil of a *toro* in the bull-ring at Madrid, but like most brave men feels himself at a decided disadvantage when he finds a lovely woman pitted against him.

"Thanks, *senorita*; under the circumstances that were out of the question. Besides, I am perfectly contented with my lot in life. My wife—I would not be able to find her equal anywhere," he says, proudly.

"You are hardly complimentary, *senor*, but you express the same admiration as Lord Rackett."

"Hang his impudence—begging your pardon."

"I have some documents to show you bearing on this matter. I presume you will examine them, Senor Jack—you who think there is only one woman in all the world who can do you a service will open your eyes when you see what Marilla de los Vegas has accomplished."

"Ah! your name—I have heard it before—where, I cannot think just now!" he says.

"Perhaps one of the nuns in the cloister spoke it—the Lady Superior is my friend—it is my money that endows that institution, senor. But the papers—will you see them?"

"Senorita," bowing, "with pleasure, and thank you deeply for your kind services."

"Ah! it is a service—that is, a pleasure to be of use to one so brave, so chivalrous toward my sex. Senor, you know that we ladies of Chili are like our Spanish ancestors—we indulge in the weed—it is the common thing here. Will you allow me to roll you a cigarette while you read, and join me in a smoke?"

He smiles and acquiesces, this man who has seen strange things in his day, and does not deem it unusually odd for a lovely lady to smoke a cigarette with him—in Spain he has done the same thing with Castilian girls. All the world does not live as we do—travelers see so much they are surprised at nothing.

So the charming Chilean senorita rolls him a cigarette with her deft fingers, and then one for herself—Doctor Jack is so deeply interested in what he reads that he fails to note the fact of her particular care in making up these delicate rolls, but she keeps one eye on him the while.

"Allow me, señor."

He accepts the cigarette, and then the taper she quickly ignites in the gas—their hands touch while the exchange is being effected, and again that rosy flush covers her face and neck. Spanish blood is hot as lava overflowing old Ætna's craters—our cold, self-possessed girls do not bear any resemblance to the daughters of Spanish American climes.

"Does it suit you, señor?" very anxiously.

"Admirably," with a half-concealed grimace, for like most men he detests a cigarette, though he must be a barbarian to refuse to smoke one when rolled by such dainty fingers as the Senorita Marilla's.

"And the papers?" eagerly.

"I find them—very important," returning to his perusal with forced interest, for already does Doctor Jack feel a heavy lethargy stealing over him, such is the power of the subtle drug with which this charmer has dosed his cigarette.

He tries to shake it off, smokes furiously and exhausts the cigarette, endeavors to talk, but makes a farce of it, gives a groan and allows his head to fall over upon the shoulder of the lovely Chilian who has watched his struggle with her heart in her glorious eyes.

"*Carramba!* Doctor Jack," she says, in triumph, "now you are in the snare—you are mine!"

And at exactly the same moment there enters the street known as the *Calle los Angeles* one Larry Kennedy, dude, from New York, and Doctor Jack's wife.

CHAPTER IV.

TWO WOMEN—ONE MAN!

Larry Kennedy swings his small figure in front of the street lamp with the smoked glass.

"By Jove! here we have it, Cousin Avis—read yourself—the *Calle los Angeles*," he ejaculates.

"But why did that driver put us down at the wrong corner?" she demands.

"Give it up, unless—a stupendous idea strikes me—the fellah is in league with your enemies, and wanted you to get lost," declares the little man in a burst of confidence.

"It was fortunate Jack left the letter behind him, or we would not have known where to seek. Look, here comes an *alquazil* along—perhaps, for a consideration, he would condescend to give us some information."

"It's a beastly shame, you know, that a man of my education and abilities must be compelled to ask advice from such a creature; but the fortune of war compels strange things. Ah! what shall I ask, cousin?"

"Where the Don resides—the name signed to the letter, you remember."

Avis wears a heavy veil in order to conceal her features, for at this hour no respectable lady cares to be seen on the streets of this city, which at present is made up pretty much of discordant elements.

The *alquazil* draws near, glancing suspiciously at the couple, but Larry believes in taking the bull by the horns, and advancing until he waylays the

officer, pushes several coins into his hand, at the same time inquiring, with what he believes to be the best of Spanish, the location of Don Rafael's residence.

His meaning is at least evident, and as the Chilian police officer feels the silver press his palm, his tongue is loosened, and he proceeds to give directions how to find the place for which they seek.

Larry soon loses himself in what the man says, but preserves a dignified silence, and at the conclusion nods gravely as though he has the whole matter preserved in that little head of his, though immediately turning to Avis.

"By Jove! cousin, I hope you succeeded in catching his meaning better than I did—his—accent is simply horrid, you know. It's a beastly shame a man trips up on his own language!" but he is calmed by her assurance that she managed to master what the policeman said, and will be able to identify the place sought.

So the pair turn into the *Calle los Angeles*, and leave the *alquazil* under the smoky lamp, biting the *pesetas* he has received, as though fearful lest they may prove to be counterfeit, or the whole affair a dream.

"Let me know if you discover two lions beside a heavy gate, Cousin Larry."

"Lions!" he bursts out, and then laughs, "oh! yes, you mean stone ones—I understand—began to think we might have a grand hunt on this square of the angles. I'll keep an eye out for lions every day of the week. My African experience, don't you know, makes me a keen judge of the beast—awful clever of the Don to mark his place so that strangers may find it,"

The little man gabbles on in this strain until he is suddenly electrified with:

“Here we are!”

“Bless my soul, outgeneraled after all—but then I never pretend to compete with a girl as bright as you, Avis.”

“Speak low, cousin. Much may depend on our secrecy. Doctor Jack has enemies here—they have lured him away for a purpose, and his wife has come to the rescue to teach them what an American woman is capable of doing when the man she loves is in danger,” from which it may be seen that her faith in the loyalty of her husband has never wavered an iota, in spite of the cunning plot to shake it, and arouse that monster, jealousy, within her faithful heart.

Larry is by this time duly impressed with the serious nature of the situation. He is not quite such a fool as he looks, and on occasions may develop a surprising amount of good sense as well as philosophy.

“Give your orders, Cousin Avis. You remember I promised to call you the general. Shall I break in this door?”

She is compelled to smile when she glances at the puny figure of the dude and then takes in the massive gate between the stone lions, and which threatens to bar their farther progress.

“Reserve your strength, my dear Larry—unless I am greatly mistaken, the gate is ajar.”

At her words the dude springs forward, and discovers the truth—there will be no necessity for deeds of valor on his part—at least not yet. In good time he may be called upon to play his part, and Larry Kennedy in the past has given proof that in

his diminutive body there lives a soul much too large for his size.

He proceeds to push the heavy gate partly open, and Avis enters—the perfume of many flowers greets her—it is overpowering in the night air, and Doctor Jack's wife somehow feels a strange sensation come over her. This is the place to which her husband has been lured, for some purpose as yet unknown, and she seems to associate the perfume of these flowers with the secret mission of their enemies.

Then, with the resolution that has characterized the Avis Morton of old, she recovers.

"Let us push on, cousin—see, lights gleam through the trees yonder. We will find the house there—the house of Don Rafael. I wish I had thought to ask that officer if by chance he saw Jack enter this street—he could not see him without remembering—but it is too late now."

They advance slowly, for although there is a wide path leading from the gate, a drive-way, in fact, under the shadow of the luxuriant trees, it is impossible to see distinctly, especially when one keeps watching the lights that gleam beyond. Once Avis stumbles and nearly falls.

"Beg pawdon, my dear cousin—I was an idiot not to offer you my arm. Lean on me—you will find Larry Kennedy a tower of strength in an emergency."

"Do for Heaven's sake talk in whispers, cousin. We are in the enemy's country, you know," she feels impelled to say, and he realizes that even a brave man may be indiscreet at times.

"I am dumb—miserably dumb," he replies.

It is just as well, for the house looms up before

them now, though as yet they have had no glimpse of a living being.

Here are the stairs—they ascend, no longer groping in darkness, for the illumination is more than sufficient to disclose their surroundings. Should they meet any servants, Avis believes she will be able to manage them, first with magic silver, then by a glimpse of her fair face from behind the vail—women understand the power that lies in their grasp better than most men suspect—and if all else fails an appeal to arms can be made, when valiant Larry will be given an opportunity to show his mettle.

Fortunately it happens otherwise, and they are not confronted by any Cerberus at the door, demanding their business.

A strange silence reigns in the house, and Larry likens it to a great tomb. Here are lights and flowers, but where can they find the human occupants—why do they not hear the hum of voices or the notes of music?

So they pass into the great hall, where hang elegant paintings, relics of the chase, of war—many things that proclaim the proprietor a man of cultivation and wealth.

A spirit of unrest has assailed Avis—something seems to assure her that the man she loves and honors is under this roof and in danger. Putting this and that together—the note that came into Jack's hands, the apparently accidental conversation which she heard under her window at the hotel, and Larry's simple explanation regarding what he knows—her woman's wit has been able to figure out something like the truth. At any rate she believes her coming to be an inspiration.

A door on the right opens into a luxurious drawing-room—she runs thither and, holding her breath, looks in.

The gas is turned low, and not a sign of human occupancy does she discover. This is only a beginning, however—other rooms remain which will undoubtedly prove of a more profitable nature.

As she turns, after sweeping her eager eyes around the richly decorated room, she catches the attitude of Larry Kennedy. The New York dude is a picture as he stands there like a statue, his heavy cane grasped in one hand while the other is raised with the finger pressing his lips.

Evidently the little man has himself made a discovery of great importance—at least he holds such an opinion.

In an instant, as it seems, Doctor Jack's wife has flown to the side of her cousin—he says not a word, but points through the door-way close by, and Avis Evans, looking, is almost paralyzed with a sudden cold fear at the sight she beholds.

Imagine a loving, faithful wife being a witness to the caresses a rival bestows upon the man she loves with all her soul—that is what occurs in this grand Chilian mansion, which has been invaded by the Americans.

A woman sits in a chair—she half supports the head of a man seated very close to her, pats his face with gentle little strokes, and murmurs, while she thus caresses, words of love, devotion.

The light shines full upon his face, and Avis can see beyond all doubt the well-known features of her husband.

Under such circumstances even the mildest woman under heaven would feel her blood leap like

boiling lava through her veins, and Avis does not pretend to be an angel, even if Jack has many times called her one.

She forgets everything save that here is a woman usurping her rights. One thing she does notice instantly, and it gives her considerable satisfaction—he makes no movement to return the caresses thus bestowed—his face, as seen in the gas-light, proclaims the fact that he is asleep, or else, God help her, dead—it's pallor has alarmed her.

Obeying the impulse that urges even the weak to claim their rights, Avis starts forward. Larry trots at her heels like a faithful little dog—Larry who is ready to fight or flirt at any hour of the day, such is the singular conglomeration of qualities that make up his composite parts.

As she enters the room perhaps the sweep of her garments reaches the ear of the dreamer who thus sits and caresses the face of the senseless doctor. At any rate she looks up in astonishment, for never a suspicion has entered her head that witnesses are present.

Avis Evans looks upon the face of her rival, the Chilian girl who loves her husband, and whose strange notions of right allow her to plot against the peace of a wife. She shivers as she looks—the wonderful beauty of that face astounds her; but never for one moment does she doubt the faithful love of her Jack—that has long ago been tried in the fire and found to be pure gold without alloy.

“Senorita, I will relieve you from further trouble—allow me to take charge of my husband,” she says, quietly.

“You!” grasps the other, her eyes dilated with surprise, and growing fury—“*cospita!* I know you

now—the woman he does not love, but calls his wife!”

CHAPTER V.

DOCTOR JACK WAKES UP.

It is a cruel shaft, mercilessly aimed, but the shield of perfect trust and love still protects the heart of that American wife and turns the barb aside.

Avis winces under it, but her self-possession returns, and this makes her mistress of the situation. Even in the house of her rival, which she has invaded without an invitation, Avis proves her superior powers.

“What you insinuate is entirely false. You lured him here with a letter in which you promised him certain information respecting the business that keeps him in Chili. Under the name of Don Rafael you did this. He came, fearing nothing, and ready to brave all risks in order to learn more. You failed to move him while he had his senses, and you steal those away in some manner so that you may win. But you forgot one thing—Doctor Jack’s wife. She has a mortgage on his affection, which you nor any other woman dare not raise—she is here to press her claim—to prove herself worthy of the love and devotion of a man who never in all his life has done a dishonorable deed. Once again I tell you to leave that seat—I am present to care for my own!”

Her words are cool and clear—they do not speak of passion, such as a Chilean girl might naturally exhibit under similar circumstances, but at the

same time there is a light in her gray eyes that warns *Senorita Marilla* to beware.

At first she assumes a defiant air—she is in her own castle, and that gives courage. Then her mood changes—perhaps she sees *Larry*, who, struck by her wonderful beauty, has assumed an air of powerful admiration, just as a sun-worshiper might gaze upon the object of his adoration—his singular face when thus set is enough to disturb one's mind.

Be that as it may, she allows *Jack's* head to fall upon the side of the chair, as she springs to her feet to face his wife—the shock has some power to partially dispel the effect of the subtle drug which, given in the cigarette, has stolen the doctor's senses away, for he opens his eyes, stares vacantly about him, catches sight of *Avis*, smiles in perfect content, and sleeps again.

This one incident gives hope, however, that he may be overcoming the drug, which has not laid hold on him quite as powerfully as was anticipated.

"How did you come here?" asks *Marilla*, curiosity rising above all else for the moment—she has been almost stupefied at this sudden drop in her plans, this unexpected appearance of the brave American wife of the man with whom she has become enamored.

"My cousin brought me"—it might be more correct the other way, since *Larry* makes a poor leader—"we put one thing and another together and—well, we arrived, you see, in time to relieve you of all responsibility," and she bends over *Doctor Jack*, raises his head, caresses his brow, and then gently shakes him to see whether he may not be aroused.

"What have you done to him, woman—why does he act this way?" she demands, pausing in her

efforts, to look up into the face of the daughter of Don Rafael, who, having recovered her senses in a measure, now shrugs her plump shoulders as she replies:

"*Carramba!* how should I know—we were talking of business—he draws his chair closer to mine so that he can look in my eyes"—turning aside, unable to meet the disdainful gaze of his wife—"I feel his breath on my cheek—then I hear a groan, and his head falls on my shoulder. Well, I am surprised, but I am not afraid—I say to myself, 'this man loves me—I will bring him to his senses with my touch upon his face.' Bah! you are so rude as to disturb me before I quite succeed, but I do not despair. He is mine—you cannot take him from me!" defiantly.

"What brazen assurance!" Avis cries—she has never known its equal.

"Aha! you are Doctor Jack's wife by the law, but look at me—do you think he is blind—does your plain face compare with mine—I have been called the belle of all Chili—at my feet have knelt great men—one only I encourage, and he is my devoted slave. You may hover over him, madam, you may force him to deny the truth, but hark you, he loves me!"

What blasphemy this seems in the ears of that wife—and yet not for one moment does her perfect trust falter—she knows the man whom she loves, she has read the depths of his heart, and found there an integrity that all earth cannot swerve. Angels could not make her believe him guilty of any deceit toward the woman he calls his wife.

Again she shakes Jack—if he would only come back to his senses they could leave this place.

"I do not believe your words—look, in his fingers he holds the end of a cigarette—you rolled that, *senorita*, and in it I read the cause of his strange stupor. Wake up, Jack, and tell this woman she plots in vain—that when she next seeks to trap a man let her make sure he has no wife to interfere."

The third shake grows more energetic, and Doctor Jack even grunts, as a man will at being disturbed in a delightful nap—grunts and settles himself down in the easy-chair as though he is contented to be let alone, which his faithful spouse does not mean shall occur, for she gives him other and more vigorous turns, just as one might use a dear friend who had swallowed certain drugs and must be kept awake, as slumber means death.

This peculiar proceeding is watched by the two persons in the room, though of course with different motions—Larry desires to see his friend and cousin arouse himself, while the *senorita* sneers at the apparent futile efforts Avis puts forth.

"Spare yourself the trouble—he will not respond to your appeals," she says.

"It is false—see, he is even now showing signs of returning consciousness."

She renews her endeavors—the massage of love may yet win—it is a wife who thus strives to arouse her liege lord.

Larry has been an interested spectator to this spectacle, but now he finds something to occupy his attention in another quarter. Voices are heard—and new actors appear upon the scene.

"Great Scott! how is this?—the lady—it is Avis, and here!" says Lord Rackett as he pushes his great athletic figure through the door, followed by Colonel Garcia.

Was ever fortune so cruel? What has sent them here at this particular moment, when Doctor Jack lies helpless in his chair with Avis hovering over him, leaving only Larry, small of stature but a giant in nerve, to stand against them.

He grasps the situation at once and pushes himself forward so as to come in front—what conversation he heard between these men on the Plaza Heel-right has warned him concerning their intentions, and he feels that a hawk has suddenly darted down upon the dove-cote, threatening its fair inmate with harm.

“Stand back, fellows!” snaps this animated dwarf, as he whirls his heavy cane in the faces of the advancing couple, who, startled by the unexpected bar placed upon their further progress, come to a halt.

If looks can kill, their scowls will do the American up in quick order. They exchange a meaning glance and then move, not forward, but to either side. Such a division of forces will have a disastrous effect upon his case, as it leaves him unable to watch both men and protect front and rear.

While this little affair takes place Avis still wrestles with the stupefied doctor—she spares him not, since the situation has become so critical in its nature—Larry is devoted, but even such bravery when in a small body cannot long stand out against overwhelming numbers. His strong arm—Doctor Jack’s—would soon turn the scale. So she works and talks industriously, pleading with him to arouse himself, to shake off this lethargy and save them from ruin.

“Wake up, Jack, dear Jack! It is Avis who calls, your own Avis. We are beset, and need your help. Wake up, or all is lost, for Larry cannot hold out

against them!" she cries, accompanying every few words with a shake that makes his teeth rattle, and by this means she is slowly but surely causing the drugged doctor to throw off the incubus that has for a while paralyzed his brain—he gasps for breath, opens his eyes, and stares in a stupid manner about him.

"Larry—how in the world—oh, yes, we're in Spain yet—I see—and things look dused ugly for us. Bless me, I can't keep awake—it's agony to try, Avis; there's a dear girl, let me have a cat-nap and I'll be feeling wonderfully better."

But the same "dear girl" is just as determined that he shall not have a relapse—the change, if any occurs, must be in the other direction, and so this singular massage of love continues, while Doctor Jack groans and expostulates; presently, perhaps, she will succeed in getting through his benumbed brain the real cause for it all, when the man must become himself.

Already Larry struggles in the arms of the enemy; the two men, turning, have come at him from different directions. His heavy cane does yoeman service, and the first whack sends Colonel Leon Garcia, that noble exponent of "how to win glory from behind a tree or stone wall," to the floor, with stars dancing before his eyes.

Unfortunately Larry is not an Irishman wielding a shillelah, and before he can recover himself after making this ten-strike, the second of his enemies has descended upon him as might an avalanche in the Alps.

Lord Rackett is so large, and his antagonist of such diminutive stature, that it would seem as though the latter must be crushed at once; but the battle is

not always to the strong nor the race to the swift, and Larry is so exceedingly nimble that he manages to elude the punishment meant for him, while at the same time he keeps up a vicious fusillade of savage kicks at the shins of the Briton, which must be very exasperating and painful.

Garcia picks himself up from the floor—Garcia, who is a beautiful sight to behold, for the heavy cane thumped him on the forehead, and already a lump has arisen the size of an egg.

From his eyes flash the fires of hatred and revenge. The hot Spanish blood demands retaliation, and woe to Larry if he once feels this man's grip.

No wonder Avis increases her cries and the fury of her massage. He must arouse himself or they are all lost. And it happens that while she thus entreats and exhorts she by chance gives utterance to the name of the man whom he has learned to despise—the man who has sworn to wed Doctor Jack's widow. It electrifies him as might a galvanic battery. He springs erect.

"Ah! where is this British lion, this plotter against a woman's peace?" he cries; "let me show him how an American can defend his own. I see him, the rascal. Avis, dear, step aside, and don't fear, for your Jack is on deck, and himself again."

Yes, thank Heaven! Doctor Jack has come to time.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN KIRKE SMITH COMES IN.

The situation has undergone a change, and now the American party is on top. Avis no longer has cause to cry out and feel that a dire calamity overshadows them, for she has perfect faith in Jack's ability to take care of any man opposed to him.

When Doctor Jack so suddenly leaves the side of his wife, his eyes are fastened upon the tall figure of the Briton, who is waging his queer and unequal fight against the plucky bantam, Larry Kennedy. *En route*, however, Jack has his attention drawn to the Chilian officer, whose attitude is so threatening that it is plain to be seen the dude stands in more danger from this source than from Lord Rackett.

Hence, Jack changes his course, and heads for the colonel, who, with a quick eye for danger, which has served him on many an occasion in the recent war, realizes that a tornado is bearing down upon him.

The Chilian is wise beyond his years, and discreet. There is not a man in all the country better able to take care of himself.

A dead man is of small service to any one, and under this policy Colonel Leon knows how to skip out of an engagement with a whole skin.

He waits not on the order of his going, but, dropping his ferocious aspect, as well as the dude's cane, which he has picked up from the floor, he turns and makes a beautiful flying leap through the door,

leaving the Englishman alone to face his foes. At any rate, the colonel will live to fight another day.

Doctor Jack can now turn his attention in the direction of the Briton, who sees him coming, and is not averse to the meeting. He flings Larry to one side with a tremendous sweep of his muscular arm, as one might brush away a troublesome fly.

"At last!" he exclaims, almost savagely.

He has cherished a spirit of revenge for years, and here is the man against whom it has been directed. The woman he once loved, ay, and for whom he still cherishes a passion, looks on. It will give him the keenest delight to punish her husband before her eyes.

As for Doctor Jack, what he has lately heard concerning this man, from the lips of the one with whom he has been in league, gives him a fierce desire to meet the Briton—to teach him that Americans are ever ready to do battle in defense of their wives, and give the man a lesson he may long remember.

So they meet.

It is like the impact of mighty forces, for both men are powerful, both urged on by the strongest motive force in the world—hatred.

Avis looks on with glistening eyes. Her only fear is lest Jack may have been weakened by the drugged cigarette, and unable to do himself justice. In such an event she stands ready to fly to his aid—something she holds in her hand will change the tide of battle instantly—at any rate, Jack must not be hurt.

Larry, too, watches with intense interest, and is ready to join in the fray, if necessary. He can hang upon the British bull-dog's arm, and prevent

him from utilizing his full power, or, by clutching one of his legs, trip him up.

It happens, however, that Doctor Jack does not need any assistance. He has been thoroughly aroused by the gravity of the situation, and the presence of this man who covets his wife, so he shows himself at his best.

They whirl about the room locked in each other's embrace like a teetotum, or a couple of spinning dervishes, coming against the far wall with a crash. It is Lord Rackett who gets the full benefit of this contact, and it rather takes the wind out of his sails.

He soon concludes that he does not care quite as much about demolishing the Yankee who carried off the prize, as he imagined. It must have been a mistake. Then there is Garcia, poor Garcia, who received such a wicked crack over the head. Perhaps his mind is wandering, and he may get into some trouble unless he has a friend to look after him.

Thus many philanthropic reasons appear to Lord Rackett why he should terminate this little engagement in which he gets decidedly the worst of it. He suddenly makes a supreme effort, and breaks away from the other's hold. Jack is not particularly anxious for his company, although bent on delivering punishment. He never seeks a quarrel, and yet they find him always ready to take care of himself.

When he discovers that he is not pursued, the Briton turns in the door-way to hurl defiance back at the man with whom he has just been engaged, and assure him they will meet again. Evidently the date of that meeting is not the present, for when Doctor Jack makes a rush in that direction Lord Rackett Plympton vanishes like the morning mist in the valleys of the stately Andes.

Jack looks around, and is just in time to see the Chilian senorita endeavoring to leave the room. Larry sees fit to block the door, bowing, with one hand on his heart, and what is meant to be a killing smile upon his face; but Marilla de los Vegas snatches a small dagger from her bosom, and at sight of it the dude quickly steps aside, again bowing as he allows her to depart. Larry has no desire to run contrary to the will of an infuriated beauty who handles such toys.

The first act of Jack Evans, when the clouds of battle have passed and victory is assured, is to turn and take his wife in his arms, and Avis, pleased to know that her massage of love has been successful, smiles in his face as she nestles near his heart, feeling that the plots of the lovely senorita to steal her Jack can never succeed.

"We must get out of this, by Jove!" remarks the little man, soberly.

"Larry, my dear boy, how are you? Shake hands. It's like old times to set eyes on your honest phiz again. What brings you to this republic of the Pacific, for I take it you are not here by mere accident?"

"Tell you later, dear boy—concerns your welfare, too. At present it stwikes me the sooner we quit this palatial twap the better."

"Wise Larry. That long head of yours is full of bright thoughts. For my part"—with a perceptible shudder and a curious look at Avis—"I have not the slightest desire to remain here a minute longer than I can help. We can have a good explanation later. What are these papers—ah! the bait with which I was drawn into the trap. It may pay me to take them along and examine them at my leisure."

So saying, he gathers them up, after which the trio start to leave the house. Various sounds can be heard in different parts of the mansion, which is certainly far from being quiet now; but they move along unmolested, and presently reach the front door.

Down the steps they pass, heading for the large gate. If this should be closed they may experience new trouble. A chance will then be offered for Larry to show his mettle and demolish the obstruction, though the chances are it will require all the muscular force which Doctor Jack can bring to bear in order to break down such a barrier.

Fortune favors them. The heavy gate is still ajar just as Avis and Cousin Larry left it, and in another moment, with relieved and thankful hearts, the trio reach the *Calle los Angeles*.

All is plain sailing from this on. At the point of junction with the main street Doctor Jack sights a vehicle that will hold them all, so he hails the driver. It chances to be a private carriage, but what of that? The magic silver proves too much for the driver, and he agrees to carry them all to the *fonda*, which they presently reach.

Time—nine-twenty.

A good deal has occurred since the sun went down in the west, and considerably more is upon the programme for the next twenty-four hours. The world will be electrified by an event that has been impending for some time, but of that more anon.

When Doctor Jack has seen Avis safe in their rooms at the hotel, and an explanation has been given on both sides that clears up all hazy points connected with this singular affair, he asks to be excused for a short time, as Larry awaits him be-

low—Larry who has come to Chili on a mission, and whose first business it has been to serve the man he seeks.

Of course, their conversation is an earnest one. Jack asks many questions which the other answers promptly. Upon the taller man's brow can be seen a frown, as though the news thus brought is not of the most pleasant nature in the world.

He is used to dealing with knotty questions, however, and allows no problem to go unsolved when it concerns the welfare of his fortunes, or the health of one he loves.

"The clouds look pretty dark, Larry, but you can trust me to brush them away. I thought I had my hands full before, but this new trouble, following on the heels of the adventure we have just passed through, adds to it."

"I'll stake my money on you, old boy," declares Larry, whose admiration for the doctor almost reaches the point of fetish worship.

"We are being watched even now. When you turn, carelessly notice that fellow who leans on the bar—he is interested in us."

"By Jove! I don't like his looks," says Larry, at which Jack laughs.

"You'll find a good many chaps in this town who have no claim on beauty. We'll set this fellow down as a spy."

"They know you're here. What else can they want, the beggars?"

"You see, I carry some papers—this syndicate would like to get hold of them. That explains his presence here. We will outwit them, my boy. I work best when rushed, and all these dangers rather crowd me, you know."

"Where do you go?" as Jack moves away.

"To interview that fellow," is the reply.

The dude watches Doctor Jack have a talk with the dark-faced Chilian, who appears ugly enough to be troublesome; but the American's manner is magical, and almost against his will the other is drawn into a conversation, though his manner shows suspicion.

At length he walks away, leaving the hotel.

"Well?" says Larry, as the other joins him.

"Just as I suspected. He is in their employ. I sent a message by him which may have some effect upon them, and again may fall flat. All I want is another day and night in this city. My messenger from the mines will arrive by that time, and we will sail for the golden shores of California."

"Ah! you seem to put gweat confidence in this messenger," drawls Larry.

"Because I know him, and when you meet Kirke Smith——"

"By the gods! if you've got that Texan lightning arrester engaged I give in, Jack, dear boy."

"You met him?"

"In New Orleans. I shall look for his advent with cuweosity, I assure you. If a wegiment interfered, Kirke would wade through."

"He promised to be here by to-morrow night, and unless he breaks his word we'll sail by the following day. I am seriously thinking of changing at the isthmus, taking steamer in the gulf and heading for New York. This is the effect of the news you brought. At any rate, sail we do, if Kirke Smith comes in."

CHAPTER VII.

THE STRANGE ADVENTURE IN A HACK.

If Doctor Jack imagines for a moment that his enemies are asleep, he labors under a delusion to be sure. Men of the Lord Rackett order being built upon the bull-dog system, do not give up a cherished object easily. A little backset only arouses more of the stubborn spirit in them, and they set about forming new and ingenious plans in the place of the bubbles that have burst.

The American is deeply concerned regarding certain things, and makes a proposition to Larry, who readily acquiesces. Then Doctor Jack seeks his rooms above, where he finds Avis, reading by the light of a lamp.

"I have decided to see the head of the police force, the *Intendente* as they call him, concerning certain facts. Larry will remain below, dear, in case you want him," he says.

To his surprise, Avis shivers as she puts her arms around his neck.

"Be careful, I beg of you, Jack."

"Why, my dear girl, you have been with me in scenes of danger before now, and never showed the white feather. Why, you are trembling all over. What does this mean?"

The discovery he has made alarms him. Her health is more to him than all else.

"Oh! Jack, since you left me, as I sat in my chair,

I had a terrible dream. It seemed to me as though they had poisoned you."

"Heaven forbid! I don't look like a dead man, do I, Avis dear?" he says, cheerily.

"It made a strong impression on my mind, and the first thing my eyes fell upon as I awoke shuddering, was the bowl of beef tea which was sent in for you some time ago."

He laughs.

"And, of course, you imagined some one had been meddling with it. Come, my dear girl, the sooner we are out of this country the better it will be for your nerves, which have been dreadfully tried of late."

"Oh! Jack, what would I not give if both of us were in New York, or on our California farm. This foolish notion, as you term it, grew upon me instead of departed; in imagination, I could see a dozen vipers in that bowl—it grew abhorrent to me."

"And so you threw it away," noting that it no longer rests upon the table. "Why, my dear, if it were still here I would speedily prove to you the harmless quality of the beef tea."

"By drinking it?"

"Yes, as I have often done before, since my sickness last spring."

"I feared as much, so—I tested it."

"Ah, you drank it, then!" a little uneasily, looking into her pale face.

"No, no, thank Heaven I was not that foolish. You remember the Maltese cat that made friends with me when we first took these rooms?"

"Yes, yes."

"Just when I was worrying over what I should do, I heard her cry outside the door. A sudden

thought flashed into my mind. I let her come in, poor thing."

"Poor thing?" he echoes, his flesh beginning to creep.

"My next move was to put the bowl down on the floor, and pussy began to eagerly lap up the contents. That was at half-past nine o'clock exactly."

"Yes," his voice is low and awed now, as though he has caught the infection of her alarm.

"When she had lapped about a quarter of the fluid, the cat stopped, and I breathlessly awaited the result."

"Well, what came of it, dear?"

She points to something on the floor.

"Under that traveling-shawl, Jack."

He springs forward, bends, and snatches the shawl away; then a cry bursts from his lips. Lying upon the floor is the body of a gray cat, stretched in such a shape that its death must have been one of agony.

"Heavens, this is terrible!" says Doctor Jack, as he stands there and gazes, while Avis clutches hold of his arm in a trembling way.

The thought which almost paralyzes Jack is in connection with Avis; what if she had taken some of this devil's broth. Surely Providence has watched over them both.

"I knew my enemies hated me, but it never entered my mind that they would descend to such a thing as poison. What more could be expected in this country after a bitter civil war, when the passions of men have been inflamed to the utmost. It gave you a shock; I don't wonder at it."

Grinding his teeth with rage, he takes up the defunct animal. His first thought is to toss it out upon

the street, but then he remembers he may need some evidence.

"I will leave it in the hall-way," he says.

"But you are not going out now, Jack?"

"There is more reason than ever that I should seek the *Intendente*; when such diabolical business is being carried on he should know the facts. I leave you armed, Avis, and Larry is close at hand. You are not afraid?"

"For myself—no. It is of you I think," she replies, her old brave nature asserting itself.

"Do not worry. I shall take a carriage at the door, and come back the same way. The distance is not far. I will return in an hour."

He examines the beef tea that remains, and even pours a portion into a vial.

"Perhaps he may wish to have a sample analyzed. It may assist the ends of justice, so I will go prepared."

Doctor Jack embraces his wife and then leaves the apartment, taking the poor feline with him. His feelings are of a more intense form than when he entered, for this last terrible blow of an unscrupulous foe has unsettled even his iron nerves.

It is evident that unseen enemies are around him, ready to strike in the dark. He groans to think that Avis is here with him, exposed to these dangers. If she were only safe, he could better afford to laugh at the plottings of his enemies.

Below he finds Larry, to whom he confides the new and alarming turn which the case has taken. As might be expected, this worthy is astounded, and shows it on his face. Like a brave man, he feels able to meet open foes, but this cowardly way of seeking revenge, adopted by the secret cabal

against whom Doctor Jack has pitted himself, is of such a terrifying, vindictive, diabolical nature that it almost freezes the blood.

Leaving the little man on guard, Jack passes outside to find a vehicle which will carry him to the *Intendencia*. One happens to be near. It looks like a lucky chance, which he is only too willing to embrace. If he did but know that this same driver has twice refused a fare within the last half hour, perhaps his suspicions might be the sooner aroused.

The night ride begins.

It is an ordinary hack in which Doctor Jack finds himself. He pays little attention to the vehicle itself, since its erratic movements presently engage his regards.

The driver must be drunk, he at first concludes. Then it flashes through his mind that when he held his brief conversation with this worthy the man gave no evidence of being under the influence of liquor. Indeed, Jack was inclined to believe him unusually bright and smart for a Valparaíso Jehu.

This, then, brings the case down to one of design. If the man is out of his mind, there is a method in his madness. His eccentric movements, passing up one street and down another, might do for a man trying to throw another off the track, but they are certainly entirely out of place for a driver who has been hired at a round figure to take a fare to police headquarters as soon as possible.

"Confound the fellow, what can he mean?" mutters the American, as for the third time his vehicle leaves the main avenue and plunges down into a darker *calle*.

It has gone beyond a joke. Doctor Jack hesitates a moment ere deciding what ought to be done, and

then pokes his head out of the window, half-expecting to see some foot-pads with whom the driver is in collusion.

The rattle of wheels drowns his voice when he speaks, and he seriously contemplates firing a shot past the fellow's ear that must bring him to terms. A shout, however, accomplishes the same thing. The Jehu turns, beholds his fare making a threatening movement, and pulls hastily up.

Doctor Jack fiercely demands the reason for his erratic movements, whereupon the man abjectly apologizes. The only excuse he makes is that the pavement is bad on certain sections of the main street, which it is policy on his part to avoid.

"Well, get to the office of the *Intendente* as speedily as possible. It's all I ask."

Perhaps his excuse is valid, but Jack has seen enough of life to doubt it. He believes the man has another motive, and is in league with outside parties, though what his purpose may be is a mystery.

The night air is chilly, but Jack keeps a window open, though he has to fasten it, as some secret spring pushes it shut. His mind is wrought up by the recent events that have occurred, and he finds plenty to think about, which will form the basis of his conversation with the *Intendente*.

Presently it strikes Jack that there is a peculiar, though pleasant odor in the vehicle. He did not notice it when he entered, hence it must be exhaled from some receptacle as they jolt along over the road.

He is at once suspicious. The very fact that the odor has a soothing effect, and makes him drowsy, causes alarm. Such things he has read of as hap-

pening in London and Paris, where wonderful games of fraud are inaugurated, but who would dream of such a thing in old Valparaiso?

Doctor Jack can circumvent a game that is even better played than this. He puts his head out of the window, and breathes the fresh air of the night, which invigorates him so that he can decide upon his next move. On a former occasion he remembers pulling himself out of the window of a hack, and reaching the roof. He tries it again, and succeeds as before, nor does the driver suspect his presence near until Jack gives him a dig in the ribs that causes the fellow to roar aloud in sudden fright.

Turning, he beholds his fare coolly seated on the roof of the vehicle, and hears spoken in Spanish the words:

"I'll finish the ride on top, man; the odor of your vehicle doesn't please me. Now, make a bee-line for our destination, or I'll tumble you overboard in a jiffy."

Baffled in all he has undertaken the Jehu heads once more for the main street. His looks amuse the American, who would fain draw from him the secret he guards, but the fellow at least has the merit of being taciturn when ugly. When at length he alights before the flaming red lantern that marks the *Intendente's* office, Jack believes he can well afford to spare the driver who has played him false, so he pays the fellow off and enters the office.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT CAME DOWN FROM ABOVE.

The office of the Valparaiso chief of police is not a model of comfort by any means, and a strong odor of tobacco smoke impregnates the air at all hours.

Doctor Jack finds the *Intendente* an agreeable man, however, more than ordinarily shrewd for a Chilian officer, though not to be compared with the Frenchman who occupies such a position in Paris.

So Jack tells his story, or at least as much of it as he deems necessary. From the manner of the other he concludes that the main facts are already known to the officer. Perhaps he has means of collecting information. Perhaps he is in some way connected with the secret cabal against which Jack Evans struggles. If the latter proves to be the truth, there is small chance of help from this quarter.

At last the American completes his narrative and demands protection. He has not broken the laws of Chili, and it is the wrath of individuals in the mad race for wealth that has been kindled against him.

"I will do what I am able. Frankly, Doctor Jack, I must tell you my office at present is poorly equipped to engage with such a powerful secret society as your enemies. The recent events in this region have torn our relations asunder. We are almost in chaos as yet. Crime runs rampant. I hardly know

which men to trust. But I shall do my best," he says, gravely.

"It is all I can ask. I do not know whether it is customary to have a permit in your city for the carrying of arms, but I would like you to write me out one. Then I shall defend myself."

"And we will hear a good account of you. *Por Dios!* I was in Madrid at the time you played your part in the *plaza los toros*, and I was forced to admire your grit."

Doctor Jack smiles. It pleases him to remember those old scenes once in a while, when the panorama of the past sweeps before him. Meanwhile the *Intendente* writes.

"That covers the case, Doctor Jack. It is hardly necessary, since every one carries arms in these disturbed times. However, in case you bowl over half a dozen of these fellows you will be held guiltless."

"They take their lives in their hands when they run across my path. I am a peaceable man, sir, but must be let alone to attend to my business. As for this impudent English bull-dog who wants to wed Doctor Jack's widow——"

The officer laughs aloud.

"Pardon, but it is too comical. I have seen much of these Englishmen. They are brave, too, but so full of boast—*carramba!* the world belongs to them—we all breathe only because they are magnanimous. Doctor Jack, I tell you I myself would give ten *pesos* to be present when you again come in contact with this Plympton."

Really, Doctor Jack is beginning to believe the Valparaiso chief of police may be a pleasant sort of fellow after all.

When he leaves him he has not learned a great

deal to be sure, but the mantle of police protection is cast upon him, whatever that may count for. At any rate, he has the right to protect himself.

The Chilian has suggested that he go on board the *Baltimore*. Captain Schley would doubtless receive a fellow-citizen of the great republic, who has become so well known as Doctor Jack, with the greatest pleasure in the world, and make quarters for himself and wife on board—at least until their vessel leaves.

It is worth thinking over.

Jack reaches the street. No vehicle can be seen, and he is now really sorry he let the other go. He might have kept the driver in his employ, and between the gift of silver and the threat of lead influenced him to be faithful.

There is only one thing to be done—he must use shanks' mare and thus reach the *fonda*. His thoughts are with Avis. Heaven grant nothing else has occurred during his absence. The terrible nature of the last shaft, so recklessly aimed at him that it might easily have taken another innocent party for a victim, has given Jack an uneasiness quite foreign to his nature.

He begins his walk.

The hour has grown late, and it is just lacking seventeen minutes of midnight when he leaves the *Intendencia*. At this time the Chilian seaport might naturally be expected to have an air of quiet resting upon its streets.

It is just the contrary.

The success of the rebellion against Balmaceda has excited all the elements in the city to such an extent that they seem to be holding a sort of picnic of rejoicing all the while. One from the States might

readily believe an election had just taken place, for bonfires blaze here and there, while it is nothing unusual to hear a gun go off. Perhaps before settling down to a business life again the Chilians desire to use up the superfluous ammunition left over after the late unpleasantness.

Jack keeps to the main street, and avoids all crowds that seem noisy, if by crossing over to the other side he can do so. Many a fracas occurs, but as the participants are natives, the spark is not applied to the magazine. That explosion is left for another twenty-four hours.

At last he sights the hotel. His own position is now assured, and the fear that pushes itself into his mind is in connection with his wife.

He glances up at the windows which belong to his rooms. All is dark there, and no sign of life can be seen, but this is just as Avis has said it would be.

It was here, just beneath the window at the corner, that the English lord and his Chilian ally came to a halt as if by accident, and held their pointed conversation concerning Doctor Jack, which was saturated with venom and especially intended for the ears of the wife seated above. Jack smiles as he remembers how this carefully arranged scheme fell to the ground, because Avis Evans had such perfect confidence in her husband.

Then, as he stands there, he remembers, too, the beautiful Chilian woman who has conceived such a passion for him, and shudders as he thinks, for somehow her adoration acts upon him as might the evil charm of a serpent, for Doctor Jack is an honorable man, deeply in love with his wife.

He has only stopped here a minute or so to recover

breath after his rapid walk, and calm himself ere appearing before Avis.

Fate sometimes manipulates things in a queer way. Even this thirty seconds, during which he stands there, are destined to be marked by an event. It would seem as though he has been allowed to reach the scene in order to be a witness of the bravery of the woman he calls his wife.

As he glances up again toward the point where, as he well knows, the windows of his rooms are situated, Doctor Jack receives a start. Not more than fifteen feet of space lies between, and against the background of sky he sees a protuberance fastened to the face of the building.

While Jack gazes, spell-bound, it moves, and he makes out beyond all question the figure of a man. This is a strange place for one to cling to like a monkey. No man would be in such a position unless he has evil intentions. It flashes through the mind of the American that some enemy seeks to do him harm. He is surrounded by so many who wish him ill that it is folly attempting to bother his head concerning the identity of this fellow.

Of course, he may be an ordinary thief, for the city has more than its usual quota of this species. Doctor Jack ponders concerning his best move, and handles his revolver with the air of a man who feels half impelled to use it, yet hesitates because he hates to shed the blood of a human being, however much the other may deserve it.

And while he thus deliberates the matter is taken out of his hands. Some one is concerned in the game whom he has forgotten to figure on—Avis.

The figure clinging to the wall makes another movement. Evidently he has stopped to rest upon a

ledge, or else because Jack's footsteps on the pavement alarmed him; but if this latter is the case he has bravely overcome his fear, since his movement is certainly upward.

By this time the fellow has his hands upon the window-sill. What if Avis sleeps—the watcher smiles grimly with the satisfaction he feels at being on hand—surely a little cherub aloft must be watching over his fortunes.

It is time something was done, and Jack slowly raises his hand to wing the dark mass thus outlined against the sky, to bring him down to the pavement a crippled wretch, howling with agony and fear.

At this moment occurs the event not down on the bills. Doctor Jack plainly hears the swish of liquid forces, and sees something shoot from the window. A few drops even splash upon his face and feel like flashes of fire, such is the heat contained in them.

As for the rogue who clings to the wall, and receives the full benefit of the fiery deluge, he gives one wild shriek of anguish. His hands release their clutch upon the window-sill above and down he comes in a heap.

Some good fortune causes him to drop in a sitting posture, and this, although doubtless painful, saves him from a fractured limb. Perhaps he fears a second deluge of hot water, or it may be his burns have set him wild. At any rate, it is ludicrous to see the way in which the demoralized chap scrambles to his feet and rushes down the *calle*, groaning, and grinding out Chilian curses with a proficiency doubtless acquired in the army.

A few people come running up and out of the hotel to see what is the matter, for although scenes of violence are frequent in the streets, they never

fail to attract attention. A cock-fight or battle of the bulls has always been a drawing card in Chili, though of late the laws are becoming more severe in this regard, and a live Yankee circus pleases the populace about as well. They are fast becoming educated along the republic of the Andes.

Nothing is to be seen, save a wet spot on the pavement, and only through speculation can they reach the truth. Doctor Jack does not linger, but a minute later gives the peculiar rap on his door which Avis recognizes, and it proves an "open sesame," admitting him to the sacred precincts beyond.

While Avis relocks and barricades the door her liege lord gropes for a chair, and, throwing himself into its depths, laughs as though he would take a fit.

"Well, you seem amused. Suppose you share the subject?" she says, sitting on the arm of the chair and stroking Doctor Jack's curly hair.

"Ye gods! I shall never forget how that fellow came down, floundering like a great bear. You brave little woman, I declare——"

"Oh, that's it! Well, I meant he should go, and gave him the benefit of the whole pan of hot water heated on our little oil stove here," she remarks, composedly, as though such a feat were an everyday occurrence. "And now, Jack, if you can control your laughter, tell me what you have seen and done since you left here."

CHAPTER IX.

LARRY ASSUMES THE ROLE OF A DON JUAN.

The balance of this singular night in Valparaiso passes without adventure. Doctor Jack, taking warning from what has already occurred, does not neglect the proper precautions for safety, and while the door is secured, no one could possibly enter at the window, left open for air, without disturbing his slumbers, and to arouse a man of his caliber would be a poor piece of business for the daring intruder, whose reception must partake of a more serious nature than a sudden hot water shower-bath.

So the day comes, that fateful October day that almost precipitates a bloody war between the valiant little South American free country and the greatest republic the world has ever seen.

It opens auspiciously for Jack.

As he comes down stairs he is accosted by a man who has just entered Valparaiso's chief caravansary—a man upon whom the dust of travel rests, and who has undoubtedly ridden far and hard.

At sight of him Doctor Jack receives a shock, for although the man's face is soiled with dust and perspiration, he recognizes him.

"Kirke Smith!" bursts from his lips.

The man holds out his hand, which is seized by Doctor Jack and heartily squeezed. Then the two step aside to a quiet corner where they may talk without being overheard, for already several Chilians watch them with interest.

"You are twelve hours ahead, Kirke. What am I to believe, good or bad news?" is the first thing Jack Evans asks.

"Both," returns the Texan rider, whose equal on a horse it would be hard to find.

Doctor Jack preserves his wonderful calmness, although his whole fortune is at stake. The man's nerve is simply astonishing, and it has won him more than one battle in the past.

"Explain what you mean, my dear fellow. Have you brought it with you?"

"Yes; lost it on the way and recovered it again. I've ridden like Satan, Jack, and met with some adventures that will do to amuse you another time."

"Quite right—they'll keep. Now, where is the—package you were to fetch?"

"Concealed outside the city. I dared not bring it in until I had seen you."

Doctor Jack heaves a deep sigh of relief.

"That much is safe, then. Once we get it on board the steamer all will be well."

"When do you sail?"

"In the morning, and you also, Kirke, my boy. Don't think I mean to lose sight of you so easily. Besides, your presence may be needed to confirm the statements in New York."

"Are you bound there?" with eager interest.

"Possibly. I have received news in the last ten hours that makes me alter my plans. Your coming, with words of cheer, brightens the skies, which were getting very dark above. I am surrounded by enemies here, and can hardly turn without knocking the elbow of a man who hopes to pick a quarrel."

The other gives a low whistle of surprise, but his face expresses no alarm. Kirke Smith has been in

some of the most desperate situations ever faced by a human being, and no one ever knew him to flinch.

Up comes Larry at this juncture, and is delighted to see the man for whom Jack has been waiting, on the ground.

His idea is that they can go on board the steamer at once, but is met by the reply that, however profitable such a move might be, it is not to be thought of until evening comes.

A boat will be engaged and kept in waiting at a certain point most convenient, and when they have secured that which Kirke Smith dares not bring into Valparaiso in broad daylight, a short pull will bring them to the steamer.

All they must avoid will be the Argus eyes of the enemies whom Jack and his trusted agent have thus far baffled, and it may be set down as certain that these men will be constantly on the alert.

The hard rider who comes from the nitrate region of Chili goes to brush up a little, and then appears ready for breakfast. Avis joins them, and in low tones they converse. Kirke has much of dramatic interest to tell, and holds them spell-bound while he relates his adventures.

To not a soul, however, does he confide the secret of where he has hidden that treasure which he has carried so far, and defended as only a brave man could. Who can tell what hostile ears may not be bent to catch his words? The secret must only be whispered in the solitude of privacy, if spoken at all.

Larry has something on his mind—this fact Doctor Jack notices, and it causes him to watch the little man curiously. Perhaps he has fallen in love with the beautiful senorita to whom Doctor Jack

owed his trouble on the preceding night. As this thought flashes through his mind it troubles him, since the dude can be as stubborn as a mule once his mind is made up, and it is hoped he will sail when they do.

So Jack determines to put him on the rack. Larry knows something—that is evident—and his tongue once limbered presently discourses upon the subject uppermost in his thoughts.

"I have weceived a lettah this a. m.—a communication of immense importance, dear boy. You wemember the lovely chawmer upon whose shoulder your head weclined last night. Well, she's given you up, Jack," with a leer.

"Glad to hear it," says that worthy, heartily.

"She's after new game. Another sun has risen above the horizon, and, by Jove! this one isn't mortgaged, either," pulling at the shadowy fringe that adorns his cheeks.

"Am I to understand it is you, Larry?"

The small man puffs out his chest until he resembles a pouter pigeon.

"I'm the victim of her second passion—a case of love at first sight. I fancied that she twembled last night when I looked at her—a powerful sight of magnetism in that glance, dear boy," and he accompanies his words with a laugh that puzzles the doctor.

"And she wrote you?" he asks, suspiciously.

"Wead it yourself, old chappie—clean case of goneeness from the start—poor girl."

There are only a few lines:

"The Senorita Marilla de los Vegas' compliments to Senor Lawrence Kennedy, hoping he will call

again to-day, when she may receive him in a more hospitable manner than last night."

Doctor Jack sneers at the wording of the note. To him it is as plain as the nose on Larry's face, or the eye-glasses he loves to sport. The trouble may be in explaining it. Larry has a bump of conceit out of all proportion to his size. These small people are generally inclined to be very important, and can strut about better than six-footers.

"I'm afraid there's a trap back of this, Larry. She may have conceived a sudden fancy for you, my boy, granted, but hate is stronger than love any day in ruling the heart, and she will use you to further her plans."

Larry shuts one eye and looks as wise as an owl while ogling his companion.

"Will she, Jack? My dear boy, you don't weally know me. I have made women a life study—the deah cweatures may deceive others, but in Larry Kennedy they have a master. Yes, I shall do myself the honor of calling upon this chawming seniorita—she smiled at me last night"—Jack almost takes a fit in suppressing his laughter as he recollects the awful look on Marilla's face, as she made that wicked jab with her dagger, and the agility with which Senor Larry sprang aside—"she will advance another step and allow me to kiss her hand to-day—the darling."

"And meanwhile manage to worm your secrets out. Ah, Larry, take care!" uneasily, for much is involved.

"Jack, you've seen me in tight places. I'm no fool, if some people will imagine it. I shall have a clevah story arranged that will deceive the angelic cweature. Trust me."

And Jack, remembering the past, feels that for him to doubt the abilities of this queer little genius is an insult—so he squeezes his hand.

“Your pardon, my boy. I might have known you were too sensible to be easily deceived, and that what you attempted would be with an eye to our success.”

“That’s it, Jack. I believe I can turn the tables on the senorita. While I appear to be wax-work in her hands, she will be dropping hints that may give us a big pull. So *au revoir*, comrade, until we meet again.”

“Be merciful, Larry. Don’t lacerate the poor girl’s feelings too dreadfully. Think of the pangs of unrequited affection—of a broken heart bowed down with grief, of——”

“Ah! there, quit it, doctor. Hang it, do you take me for a dreadful Don Juan?” and Larry rushes away with a grin on his monkey face—to meet the divine senorita and engage in a little game of deception where the keenest of wit will come out ahead.

Nor does Doctor Jack see him again for some hours. Indeed, the day is almost spent when Larry once more shows up.

During the course of the hours spent together, Jack and Kirke Smith have come to a good understanding connected with certain matters, and their plans are well arranged for the near future, though of course subject to change in case of necessity.

Doctor Jack has managed to engage quarters on the steamer that sails north at dawn of the next day, and this has been done without visiting the vessel. A sailor whom he knows, belonging to the

ship Keneenaw, anchored near the steamer in the harbor, agrees to do the business for him.

As to the boat that is to wait for them at a certain point near the Mole, Kirke Smith looks out for this. Perhaps he is not watched. At any rate, he finds a man whom he buys body and soul—this fellow, having received such a good advance payment with rich promises for the future, is ready to do anything he is told. If some inquisitive natives waylay him later on with questions concerning his coming movements, and his business with the Texan, he will have a cock-and-bull story arranged to satisfy them, and throw them off the trail.

Thus Doctor Jack is fairly well satisfied with the way things are going, though a little anxious that it should be over, when he meets Larry again; the latter is getting out of a cab at the door of the hotel and presents a ridiculous appearance—his clothing dusty, his hat banged in, his face scratched, and the empty rim of a once glorious eye-glass screwed into the cavity of his left optic—and yet above all the same old strut—which causes a groan, however—the familiar smirk, and Larry, not quite so chipper, but Larry as of yore, trips up to the astounded doctor.

“Good Heaven! my dear boy, have you been in a threshing machne, or engaged in a prize-fight?” gasps Jack Evans, amazed at the scarecrow thus presented.

“Neither, deah boy,” says Larry, with a ghastly grin, “I’ve been playing the wole of Lothario—making love to the senorita, and, by Jove! made a glorious success, as you can believe.”

CHAPTER X.

YANKEE BLUE-JACKETS AT BAY.

As Doctor Jack surveys Cousin Larry from head to foot, he makes a mental calculation that if such a condition is significant of success Heaven help the man who fails, for the dude is, indeed, an object for commiseration.

At the same time he catches an inflection under the tone of the other that tells him Larry has not been quite such a fool as outward circumstances would indicate, though he has undoubtedly been overwhelmed by misfortune.

An explanation is in order.

Larry is quite ready to give it in his own way, and the little man can, when he pleases, be quite dramatic. There is more to him than one would imagine at first glance.

It seems that he did not venture to call upon the senorita until the afternoon, when, rigged out in what he deemed his most killing suit, with perfumed handkerchief and every hair on his head in place, this little dandy of Gotham presented himself at the very gate, which, on the previous night, when in company with Avis, bent on discovering and rescuing her husband, he had declared his ability to demolish.

A ring with the bell brought a servant, and he was admitted to the mansion where the senorita awaited him.

She seemed dreadfully struck with his appearance, rather awed, Larry vowed, and Doctor Jack could

easily believe it, since the dude in full dress was enough to take any one's breath away.

They chatted pleasantly, the senorita sang numerous songs, and with such warmth that Larry was in the seventh heaven of delight. He could not resist declaring his love for this beautiful creature, and on his knees proclaimed it.

This produced a change; the Chilian beauty demanded that if he adored her he must prove the depth of his affection by renouncing the friendship of Doctor Jack and his wife and coming under her banner, when he would be permitted to worship—at a distance.

Larry's eyes were opened, and he saw the snare spread for his feet. It was not a part of his game to be tripped up. If given time he might have pretended to acquiesce, in order to learn something of the plans of the rich Chilian beauty, but as he and his friends expected to sail in the morning this would not be profitable.

When it became evident that he was unwilling to obey her request, Marilla descended to threats. She found an obstinate little man in Larry Kennedy. Nothing could move him, and so another step was taken.

The senorita clapped her hands and two native servants appeared, either of whom should have been able to have demolished the dude. These the infuriated woman set upon him much in the manner in which she might have urged a pack of hounds after game.

Larry groaned at his foolishness in coming without arms, but he was not the one to give in without a desperate struggle. They found the toughest little subject in the dude they had ever tackled. He

slipped from their grasp, dealt them sudden blows, scratched like a tiger cat, shrieked in their ears, and gave them all the fight they wanted, for they were house-servants and not soldiers used to battle.

Affairs were growing rather serious for Larry after a time, and he began to fear he would be killed, as the senorita in fury was shrieking to her men to finish him, when by rare good luck his eyes fell upon his heavy cane, which he had laid aside in order to better make love to the beauty.

Upon this he pounced with the joy a shipwrecked mariner would feel should land heave in sight. New energy seemed given him, and he beat the two cowardly servants until they howled for mercy and fled.

Then Larry bowed to the senorita, who no longer called for his destruction, but seemed awed by his dilapidated appearance, kissed his fingers to her, apologized for kicking up such a circus in her house, hoped they would meet again, and retired from the scene, leaving her speculating as to what an ordinary New Yorker might be capable of doing when a little whipper-snapper could kick up such a confusion.

This is Larry's story, though of course given in his own way, and with other embellishments.

Probably he has learned a lesson, and will not be in a hurry to again make love to a Chilian beauty. Doctor Jack chuckles as this wretched specimen leaves him to rehabilitate his form in other garments, and rub some vaseline upon the scratches on his face.

Upon the whole Larry has done well, and picked up several little points of interest, at the expense of his best suit, which is ruined. That seems to grieve

him more than any soreness of body, for he has believed himself almost invincible in that checkered triumph of the tailor's art.

The adventure proves one thing—Marilla has not given up her game, because foiled on the occasion when she made such a bold move. Doctor Jack would be uneasy on this score only for the fact that they are to leave Valparaiso in a few hours.

He notices a spirit of ugly unrest abroad. More than one little affair has taken place on this afternoon between Chilian sailors and those belonging to American vessels, and it is evident that there is bad blood between them.

Various things cause this. The Chilians have a foolish notion that the powers at Washington favored the Balmaceda government. The seizure of the Itata has had much to do with inflaming their minds, and probably the fact of their recent victory causes them to feel that they can insult the United States with impunity.

"There's trouble brewing," says Doctor Jack, as he notes these things, and his experience has been extended enough to make him a good judge.

He has an appointment at a certain hour with Kirke Smith, who has been absent from the city during the afternoon. Larry has engaged to conduct Avis to the spot where they rendezvous. Trunks have been secretly smuggled from the *fonda* by a rear door and sent on board the steamer. They flatter themselves that this has been done without the knowledge of hostile forces, and perhaps it may be so.

Doctor Jack consults his watch.

"Time I started," he says, and runs up stairs to have a few last words with Avis. Larry already

knows the part he is to play, and the doctor has such confidence in the little man that he does not think it worth while to see him again.

Once more Doctor Jack passes through the streets of Valparaiso, now crowded as though on a holiday. The events of the next few hours will prove whether fortune means to smile on him or not. Doctor Jack believes success comes to him who deserves it. He has little reliance on luck, though ready to accept any chance that wanders his way.

Noticing the unruly element in the crowd that jostles along the street, he congratulates himself in the wisdom that has led him to don certain garments much in vogue among Chilians at this time, which, with his sunburned face and the wide brimmed hat he wears, allows him to pass for one of the citizens of Valparaiso.

This fact serves him well later on, and even now he finds progress made much easier on account of it.

Evening is drawing near, when Doctor Jack, drawn by some singular fate passes down the *Calle des Arsenal*, and comes face to face with Colonel Leon Garcia. Behold, what a small thing kindleth a great fire! The sarcastic smile on Jack's face as he remembers the ridiculous figure this proud Chilian officer cut on a recent occasion makes the blood boil in the other's veins. He sees a chance to make trouble, for as bad luck will have it some of his henchmen happen to be near by. These fellows catch his looks, and, boiling over with the desire to make trouble, follow Doctor Jack.

Just below, a gang of Yankee sailors emerge from a *cafe*. They are not drunk, but inclined to be noisy, as sailors on shore-leave may always be ex-

pected to prove, singing snatches of songs, joking, and laughing.

Again hard luck. A squad of Chilian sailors from the war vessels are passing by, perhaps under the influence of liquor. During the afternoon a number of rows have begun that were only quelled by the efforts of officers belonging to the Baltimore. Thus there is bad blood between the men; the hour is ripe for a *melee*, and it only needs a spark to start it going.

Doctor Jack is made aware of the fact that he is an object of solicitude to numerous fellow-beings when some one jostles him rudely. As he turns to expostulate another bravo bangs into him roughly on the other side.

"Aha! that's the game, is it?" gasps the Yankee, for the second blow has almost taken his breath away.

Quick to act, the American throws out his hand, and clutches hold of the man who has just given him such a vicious whack with his elbow. He makes one muscular effort—the fellow goes spinning after his companion, and overtakes him with such force that both drop to the pavement together directly in the midst of the sailors who have at this moment come together.

One of the Chilians is struck by the heels of the last man who goes down, in such a fashion that he seems to imagine he has received a kick. He turns with a roar, finds an American sailor close beside him, and, as the worst indignity that comes to him, expectorates in the face of the Yankee, who promptly knocks him down with as clean a blow as ever flew from the shoulder.

That starts the fracas, the echoes of which will ring around the world.

It has been brooding all day, just as though a conspiracy has been formed among the lower elements in Valparaiso to wipe out the prejudice undoubtedly existing against the blue-jackets of the United States Navy.

The quiet street immediately seems to be an offshoot of Bedlam—from all quarters men can be seen rushing to the spot. It passes from mouth to mouth “the Yankee sailors have been attacked,” and the enthusiasm with which hundreds rush to the scene proves how ready they are to join in the carnival of mischief.

Doctor Jack thus finds himself in the midst of a howling, fighting mob, against his will, it is true; but all has happened so quickly that he cannot avoid the consequences unless he turns and runs, which is hardly according to his principles.

Of course, he is fairly able to look out for Number One under such circumstances. He has seen so much of adventure during the past few years that there is nothing new to him in finding around him angry men striking right and left.

An admirable boxer, he can deliver sledge-hammer blows, and at the same time, through his agility, escape punishment. Those who run up against him have immediate occasion for regret.

The Yankee sailors endeavor to keep in a bunch. They realize that their only safety lies in this system of tactics, and hence whenever they come upon other detachments of fellow-tars from the Baltimore they join forces.

It is incredible what a mob gathers—the streets become impassable—thousands crowd the scene, and the air is full of shouts and curses. One can believe the Americans will be torn limb from limb

if they fall into the hands of these enraged demons.

They are separated again and again. Their utmost endeavors to keep in a bunch are frustrated by the very number of the mob, which surges between them. Many wounds have been received; the cowardly nature of the Chilian rioters is shown in the fact that every stab is in the back. The cowards, numerically strong, dare not face the Yankee fists, but ply their blades at their backs.

Unfortunately, relying upon the assurance received from the officials that American sailors would be protected from any outrage from the rough elements that crowd the city, Captain Schley had the sailors leave even their knives on board ere giving shore-leave; but for this the brave blue-jackets would have rendered a better account of themselves.

For a quarter of an hour the fight rages. Here and there a side mob chases some unlucky tar separated from his fellows, bent upon doing murder. There is no question of right or wrong involved now—it is war to the knife. All the fierce hatred engendered in Chilian hearts rises to the surface, and they hunt these Yankee sailors with the eagerness that marks the sportsman when in pursuit of game.

Doctor Jack has been very much annoyed to find himself thus in the midst of what he at first judges to be a drunken brawl on a large scale.

Then it dawns upon his mind that there is something even more serious in the disturbance, and that a riot has opened which will cost many lives. It may even extend to a naval battle in the harbor. Who can tell?

He has business in view, and desires to get out of this disgraceful affair as speedily as possible; but

the elements surrounding him prevent even a man of his determined character from doing what he pleases.

With each passing minute the situation becomes more and more desperate. The Baltimore's men are pushing in the direction of the landing, knowing their only chance of escaping complete annihilation is in getting aboard.

Some officers have appeared upon the scene. They can do nothing to quell the riot, even when assisted by certain Chilian officers who see the terrible results of this conflict, which may bring down upon Chili the vengeance of an outraged government at Washington.

The only way of bringing the riot to an end is to get the Yankee sailors aboard, and to this purpose all set themselves.

In the midst of the intense confusion, when the streets for squares around are filled with howling Chilians, eager for the blood of the Yankee blue-jackets, Doctor Jack sees a chance to give them the slip.

He improves it, anxious to be about his own business. What does it matter to him just now that the Chilian mob has set upon those who wear the garb of the United States Navy, and that their act seems to be winked at by the police. Surely Uncle Sam is powerful enough to protect his own, or if too late for that to terribly avenge.

While Doctor Jack, with his hat pulled low over his face, makes his way through the crowd, occasionally shouting some Spanish word or phrase to make those around believe he is in sympathy with their actions, he comes upon another scene.

The police advance up the *calle* slowly. It has

actually taken them half an hour to get over a few squares. As the whole city is filled with the raging tumult there is no excuse for this tardiness, except intentional delay.

Here a few Yankee sailors have been caught separated from their companions, and beaten with cudgels, stabbed with knives, and treated in a dastardly manner, considering the fact that they are all unarmed. Had it been otherwise Valparaiso's streets would have run red with blood, for these Americans must have done terrible execution in the crowd, armed for business. Captain Schley knew what he was doing when he caused his men to leave all arms aboard, though one sometimes wishes it might have been otherwise when the character of the mob is taken into consideration.

One of these sailors has been struck down, and his comrades seem to be dragging him in the direction of a drug store, while sticks and stones are rained upon them, people in the houses even taking cruel delight in deluging them with dirty water. Shots are heard, and Doctor Jack catches the whistle of bullets. The police have opened fire, but strange to say their lead seems to be thrown more in the direction of the desperate sailors than into the infuriated mob that so relentlessly pursues them with the pertinacity of wolves chasing their quarry.

Even as he looks Doctor Jack sees the men suddenly drop Riggin, the boatswain's mate, whom they were carrying off—a bullet from the advancing police has ended his life. The scene beggars description. Gradually the Yankee sailors are enabled to fight their way to the Mole, and in the gathering darkness enter their boats, which put out from the shore, followed by loud jeers and a volley

of stones, heading for the cruiser Baltimore, which, with steam up and guns ready for an emergency, has moved in closer to pick up the seamen who serve under the insulted flag of the great republic.

CHAPTER XI.

ALL IN A FOG.

During the confusion that fills every *calle* adjoining that in which these desperate scenes are being enacted, Doctor Jack manages to escape the scrutiny of those enemies who have followed him with such pertinacity.

He believes the Yankee sailors will reach the Mole, and their vessel—the presence of several naval officers gives this idea strength. Probably the Chilian seaport will be rather an unhealthy place for Americans in the near future, thanks to the cunning of Englishmen who fear lest their hold upon the republic may be endangered by the new reciprocity policy of the United States, and are ready to encourage the spirit of hostility that seems to be growing up between the two countries.

The farther he leaves the scene of riot and excitement behind, the better Jack is pleased. He has looked upon numerous affairs, but never one that filled him more with disgust and anger than when this great mob, armed with clubs, and knives, and stones, beset the defenseless Yankee sailors in the streets of the Chilian city. He would have given five years of his life to bring a regiment of New York State troops on the scene just then.

His business takes him to another part of the city. Fortunately it is quiet here. He does not sigh for the excitement that comes in the train of war. Only when forced into it does this man show a

mailed hand, and who would not fight when brought to bay.

Kirke Smith has not yet arrived, for when Jack reaches the spot on the outskirts of the city where he has agreed to meet the Texan hard rider that worthy is only conspicuous by his absence. It is to be sincerely hoped that nothing of a serious nature has overtaken the messenger.

Of course, Jack feels somewhat wrought up over the matter. For once he admits that he is a trifle nervous, as much depends upon the arrival of Kirke with what he carries. So he counts the minutes and speculates, as a wise man may, upon what his course should be in case of disappointment.

Larry will probably carry out his share of the programme, and must wait at the rendezvous. Doctor Jack wishes he had sent Avis aboard the steamer. Then she would be safe at least, whereas now there must always be an element of uncertainty about it.

He remembers the man who longs to wed the widow of Doctor Jack—remembers him with a smile of contempt, and yet an uneasy feeling. Lord Rackett Plympton is not a man to be sneered at, and in his character of a cultivated rascal may do an immense amount of mischief.

Still Kirke Smith fails to arrive, and the doctor strains his eyes looking down the *calle* along which he must naturally come. This delay can have but one meaning—the messenger has been followed by a spy more shrewd than himself, who has waylaid him on the road back, waiting for the *coup de grace* until he has in his possession the coveted package that seems of such value to the American.

Jack moves down in that direction, hoping to

meet the tardy messenger. Here and there he pauses, for upon the hills back of the city some of the aristocrats live; these very hills that so recently bellowed forth the reverberation of cannon, as the Congressional Army besieged that of the Dictator, Balmaceda.

They frown upon him now, outlined against the heavens, but strain his eyes as he will there seems to be no sign of Kirke.

Again he walks back to the rendezvous. A dark figure is standing there, and sudden hope springs into his heart that it may be Kirke. To his disappointment it turns out otherwise, and as he glances sharply at the party he sees a native, who looks curiously at him.

"Senor, may I ask your name?" says this worthy.

"Doctor Jack Evans," promptly, for he knows no reason that he should withhold it.

"*Cospita!* it is well, senor."

"You looked for me here?" surprised.

"Si, senor, he told me this place."

"He—ah, at last—you mean Kirke Smith."

"I mean the gentleman who gave me a handful of reals, and who said you would do likewise when you read it."

As he speaks he hands Jack a piece of paper, which the other eagerly seizes. At least it relieves the awful suspense. He will know what has become of Kirke.

The darkness prevents him from seeing what is on the paper, but Jack's shrewdness is capable of surmounting such a barrier, and a match soon relieves the dilemma.

By the aid of this light he scans the paper, evidently a scrap or page torn from a note-book. What

he reads is rather ambiguous, but it is a foothold upon which he may climb higher. He recognizes the "style" of his Texan there, just as though the other stood before him, and this is what he reads:

"I need help—played the fool for once and lost my grip. Trust this man as far as you dare—but come. It is still safe, but in danger. Make him show you the way. All clear later."

"H'm! all a fog now, at any rate. What under the sun has happened to Kirke?"

Puzzled he turns to interrogate the man who brought the message, but can obtain little satisfaction. The fellow would evidently like to receive his pay and be gone, for it is dangerous having any intercourse with Americans at present. Doctor Jack has too long a head to permit this. He withholds the pay until what he seeks has been accomplished.

So, rather against his will, the man is forced to turn back and lead the American to the place where he received the note.

Jack keeps a bright lookout for squalls. He has not fully made up his mind as yet whether this fellow can be trusted, and will be governed a good deal by circumstances. At the same time he does not sleep on the way, and his hand keeps in touch with the weapon he carries.

Whatever may have happened to Kirke, it is to be hoped the delay will be of short duration. Jack is thinking of his wife, and the uneasiness she must feel at his absence.

The Chilian guide stops. Not a word is spoken, but Doctor Jack knows they have arrived at their destination. He bends forward to whisper words in the other's ear, and his manner is that of a man having authority.

"Is this the place?"

"Si, senor," comes the muffled reply.

"Where did you see him?"

"Notice this high wall, senor—here is a grating in it—once the Sisters used to live beyond and walk in the garden, but it has been a private park for some time. An English senor bought it."

"Ah! yes, and you saw this man who gave you the reals and the note——"

"Through the grating, senor, just as darkness was creeping over the hills."

"That is enough."

A handful of silver goes into the pocket of the eager Chilian.

"You can go, now."

He vanishes in the surrounding gloom like an evil spirit, and Doctor Jack is left face to face with a dilemma and a high stone wall. This must be scaled. If Kirke Smith is on the other side a prisoner, he must be given assistance. Jack confesses that the situation looks very odd to him. He finds it hard to believe that the Texan whirlwind could be caged in this way, and yet positive evidence has been given that this is so.

Speculation may do for another time. Just at present he needs action. His first move is to run his hand over the wall, and find out the nature of the material composing it.

After that he walks along to discover some method of scaling it. The fact that an English senor now owns the place is pregnant with great significance in his eyes—it means that the man who hates him, and who has vowed to wed his widow, is the proprietor.

As he gropes along, he makes a discovery that

brings him to a halt. At one point a tree grows near the wall—rather a small one, it is true, but quite large enough to give him hope. This he proceeds to ascend, and in five minutes crouches on top of the wall.

To lower himself is the next task. It would be easy enough if Doctor Jack was in the habit of carrying a rope upon his person. Unfortunately this is foreign to his principles, and he must bridge over the difficulty without such friendly support.

Crawling along the top of the wall he comes at length to a building that frowns upon him with a severe aspect, a house that looks more like a prison than a dwelling. This blocks his farther passage, but it may open a possible way for him to descend.

After a short investigation he is ready to make a move, and swings himself from the wall to a window which has a deep embrasure, and iron rods across its face as though it marks a jail.

From this he is enabled to reach another point below. Thus the agile American descends step by step until he can finally reach the ground by dropping.

Thus far he cannot complain. If the balance of the work is as easily accomplished they will be on their way before long. But where is Kirke—can it be possible the Chilian has deceived him—that this is not the place after all where the other gave him the note? He has not a very high opinion of the class to which his informant belongs. There may be some deep motive that would influence the man to deceive him.

Doctor Jack remembers that in olden times he and Kirke used to have a code of signals. Perhaps the Texan might remember them now. He utters a

little flute-like call, which one might easily believe proceeded from some bird in among the branches of a tree.

Eagerly he listens; from the city comes the various noises that are natural—a Babel of sounds, for Valparaiso has been doubly aroused by the exciting events of the last hour, and may be compared to a hive of bees into which some reckless boy has thrust a pole.

Not yet discouraged, Jack moves along, now and again repeating his signal. Finally he receives an answer. It thrills him through and through. Kirke is not far away, and has at last heard his call.

He again whistles, drawing nearer all the while, the answer becoming more distinct. One thing he has already made certain of, the sound comes from the house itself. He has had a glimpse of a light once or twice, though, generally speaking, the building is wrapped in darkness.

Now he is close enough to speak a name, and to his delight the answer comes.

"Where are you, Kirke?" he asks.

"This way, Jack, old boy," comes the voice.

The other moves along, his arms outstretched in search of the man who answers his signals. Then he strikes something, his hand closes over cold fingers, and he receives a terrible shock, for what he grasps appears to belong to a dead rather than a living being.

CHAPTER XII.

THAT HAND OF ICE.

After that one cold shiver Doctor Jack is himself again. He still holds the frozen hand that fails to return his pressure, holds it while he says in a subdued yet steady voice:

"What does this mean, old man?"

"That I have been a fool, doctor. I wish you could knock some sense into my stupid head with a club—I'd be glad to have you do it only for—that package."

"It's safe yet?" anxiously.

"I believe so, but every minute that we remain here increases the danger of losing it."

"What has happened to your arm, man?"

"Eh? Nothing."

"But your fingers are as cold as ice."

"Are they? I don't see how. Great Scott!" and the Texan can be heard chuckling in the darkness as though dreadfully tickled.

"Speak on, Kirke."

"It must be the dummy's hand you caught."

"Dummy!" casting it from him; "what under the sun are you doing with a dummy?" and Jack's voice is full of surprise.

"You see, they've got a lot of wax figures in here, probably the noted people of the world. Reckon some one used to run a show, and these are his stock in trade. Perhaps it's Julius Cæsar I toppled over, and his arm hangs out of the window—or it

may be the great and only Bonaparte—think of the honor of shaking hands with such a notable party.”

Kirke is inclined to be humorous in spite of his strange surroundings, and the presence of deadly danger. Some men would joke and laugh, if hung up by the thumbs.

“What are you doing in there?” asks Jack.

“Prisoner of war,” laconically.

“But when you gave that man the note you were at large in the garden?”

“Just so, Jack, my boy. They caught me trying to escape soon after, and chucked me into this sweet hole. I’ve been occupying my time and all my matches in interviewing the various worthies congregated here, and they’re beauties, too, I assure you. I shall be haunted all my life by some of their faces. Regular curiosity shop. Just when you came up I was busily engaged at the stone mason trade.”

“What?”

“You see the wall is very old, and I find the mortar poor. Already I’ve dislodged one stone, and another is ready to follow. While I talk I’m working like a beaver.”

“Can I help you?” asks Jack, eagerly. He admires just such boldness in conception and execution.

“Try to the left of the window. There, you may feel the stones move. Ah! we’ll vamose this ranch in double quick time, bet your life.”

Their united work has a speedy result, and hands meet in the opening—hands with a grasp that means more than ordinary friendship.

Doctor Jack is naturally curious to know how all this came about, but he asks no further questions. There will be plenty of time for those after they have made good their escape.

As the prisoner has said, the mortar is poor, and offers no resistance, so that they are able to dislodge stone after stone with very little effort.

At length Kirke declares the opening has reached a size that will admit of his passage, and with that he crawls through.

"I tell you I'm glad to be out of that den. It's one of horrors, too, and, if I'd been drinking freely of late, I'd believe I had 'em sure," and the Texan draws a great breath of relief.

Then he cocks his head on one side, and appears to be listening intently.

"I don't hear 'em, but they're around."

"What's that?" asks Jack, a suspicion flashing across his mind that perhaps his friend has gone crazy.

"Are you armed, old fellow?"

"Of course. See here."

The Texan fondles the weapon eagerly as though he were a miser gloating over his gold.

"I hope they'll discover us now. I'd be tempted to shout and arouse the house, if you only had a mate to this for me."

"Well, I have, but don't do anything rash. Remember we've got a great deal to accomplish yet, and can't afford to be foolish."

"On your request I'll bottle my enthusiasm and remain dumb," replies Kirke, whose spirits have gone up three hundred per cent. since he learned that he could keep the weapon Jack thrust into his hand.

"Tell me, is it in this place?" asks the doctor, "for if so I don't mean to leave in a hurry."

"Outside," is the quick response.

"Then come with me, and I'll show you how I entered."

They move along the face of the building in the direction, as Jack believes, of the spot where he descended. It may not be so easy to get out, but where there's a will there's a way; and these determined men are not the ones to be daunted by obstacles.

Thus far fortune has favored them, but it now frowns. Loud voices are heard in their rear, lights are seen, and the barking of a dog indicates that the excitement means something connected with their flight.

"The goose is cooked—they're coming," says the Texan, calmly, and one could almost declare there is a ring of pleasure in his voice, as though he anticipates a picnic in the encounter.

Indeed, the clamor in their rear has by this time reached such proportions that it is positively alarming. Men shout and swear, and new lights flash upon the scene, until it even looks as though giant fireflies are darting hither and thither through the garden.

"We can defend ourselves, but the time has not yet come. Here is an open door. Let's investigate the house."

The audacity of this plan pleases Kirke Smith. He chuckles over it, even while following Jack into the inky hall-way.

"Tit for tat. As they go out we enter in. Eureka! Lead on, Doctor Jack," he mutters, "and I'll follow even to Satan's land."

Jack gropes his way along. It will be a strange thing if they cannot find some door or window opening upon the street, by means of which they may escape.

Let the minions of Colonel Garcia and the English lord search for them in the garden. Even if the dog shows them the hall which the fugitives have entered, they will not be much worse off, since they can put their backs against the wall and fight.

Steadily Doctor Jack pushes on—no matter what the confusion outside, he will not risk everything by too much speed—at the same time he is no laggard.

The hall ends, but a door is found which opens at a touch, and they discover a room in which lights abound. It has been occupied by a number of persons, and is evidently a parlor, for a piano and pictures can be seen.

Nor is it destitute of human occupancy now; two ladies are seen at a window; they lean out, and very probably look into the garden, where the mad search goes merrily on.

Doctor Jack believes that in one of these ladies he sees the senorita who gave him so much trouble on the preceding night; but there is no need of verifying this suspicion. They may slip through the room unnoticed.

He pinches Kirke's arm to make sure that the Texan realizes the gravity of the situation, and then puts a finger on his lip to indicate silence.

After that the two men start to pass through the room. There is some floor covering under their feet, which helps to conceal the sound of their footsteps. Hence, it is not any noise made by them that attracts attention.

Just when they are in the middle of the room one of the figures in the window turns and the Chilean beauty finds herself face to face with Doctor Jack.

She is taken quite by surprise, and stares, while

the American, equal to the emergency, makes a polite salaam.

Then he follows Kirke, who has taken the lead at this moment, leaving the senorita standing rooted to the spot. She will not remain long in this attitude, but turning to the open casement will endeavor to let those below understand that the parties they seek are even then in the house.

Such being the situation, it necessitates more speed on their part in order to gain an exit. By degrees Doctor Jack is picking up some ideas regarding the lay of the land—-which is the front of the house, for he believes, yes, he is sure it faces on a street at the point where he reached it on the wall.

A strange flight this is, and in the future they will doubtless smile when memory brings it before their mental vision. At present it is a serious business, since those who chase them are desperate men bent upon visiting their anger on the heads of the Americans.

“This looks like it.”

As he speaks, Doctor Jack comes to a sudden pause in front of a window.

“It’s barred,” cries Kirke, in dismay, as he notices the iron which was doubtless placed there when the house was a convent.

“Bah!” sneers the other—his hands close upon one of the irons; strangely enough they are on the inside of the window instead of the usual place for such protections. It was not to prevent people from breaking in that these were placed there, but to keep the inmates from breaking out.

This man takes a firm hold, and as he utters that one contemptuous exclamation, wrenches the rusty bar from its socket and tosses it aside.

"Hurrah!" exclaims Kirke. "That's one."

By this time his companion of muscle and sinew has grasped a second bar, which he twists from its lodging with even greater ease than the first.

"Eureka! what can stand up against us? One more fixes it, Jack."

"Look out, then!" says the other, quietly.

They can hear a roar of voices in the house, and know their enemies have been put upon the right trail, either through the dog's keen nose, or the senorita's outcries.

Crack!

The opening is now complete, and Kirke hastens to accept the invitation it offers; pushes his body through, hangs by his hands, and then recklessly lets go without more than a guess as to the distance that may be between his feet and the ground.

Nor does Doctor Jack hesitate about following the example thus set. He hears sounds below, which would indicate that Kirke has fallen among a number of enemies, and this being the case he is in need of assistance.

As he falls he finds himself in the midst of struggling figures. A light is suddenly hung from one of the windows, and Jack blesses the hand that thus gives him a chance to distinguish friend from foe. The way in which he sails in is indicative of his spirit. Those heads that meet his knuckles regret the contact. His onslaught produces consternation among them, and a temporary panic, during which the voice of Doctor Jack is heard calling:

"Make a run for it, Kirke. Away we go!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TELL-TALE GLOVE.

It is a wise move on the part of these two comrades to beat a retreat in the face of so numerous a body of foes, and the manner in which they conduct this proves their ability to take care of themselves.

The Texan is engaged at the time the call comes, but he speedily breaks all attachments and sunders the ties that bind, though the parties with whom he wrestles endeavor to prevent such a consummation by every means.

When he catches up with Doctor Jack, he finds that worthy glancing over his shoulder as if to make sure that his comrade follows.

"We are pursued, of course?" says Jack.

"Yes, here they come," returns the other, and from the racket that arises it is plain to be seen that he speaks the truth.

They would much rather elude their pursuers than have a conflict, but if it comes to such a thing these men are not the kind to shirk their duty.

"Leave it to me," Kirke has said, and his companion is only too ready to do so, for the Texan is the one who knows where the packet that seems so important to their success is secreted, and perhaps he can lead them to it.

They dash along with the speed of sleuth-hounds on a fresh scent, and presently the gratifying news is flashed from one to the other, that they leave their foes behind. This can be positively ascer-

tained by the gradually diminishing sounds that follow them.

Then Kirke changes his course. In five minutes they are heading back toward the quarter from whence they came, though by a different route.

"Getting warm, now. Soon be at the place," says the Texan, over his shoulder.

Suddenly he stops, and puts out his hand to stay the progress of his companion. Both have been advancing at a quick walk, and now come to a halt. Doctor Jack realizes that something ahead has caused the change, and he looks in this quarter to see what it may be.

There is a light on the road—a man swings a lantern to and fro as he walks—keeps it close to the ground as though he would follow certain foot-prints he sees there

"Watch him," whispers the Texan, who appears able to guess a good many things that develop.

Just at this moment the man who carries the lantern comes to a halt, turns squarely on his heel, and then bends down.

"Well," grunts Kirke, "this is the best of luck."

"What has he discovered?" whispers the other.

"That which we seek."

"But where does the good luck come in."

"You see, if we had come just ten minutes later we'd have been——"

"Ingloriously left. Of course, you can't see his face. You don't know who it is?" continues Jack.

"I can guess. Colonel Garcia himself. While his minions kept me closely confined, he has been on the lookout to discover where I might have secreted the packet. Well, he has found it, and much good may it do him."

"Let's move closer."

It is good advice, since the man may yet disappear with the packet. So they advance again. The stooping man is so earnestly engaged in what occupies his attention that he does not notice their approach. They are just in time to see him lift something out from under a stone.

He laughs as he holds it up, and scoffing words in the Chilian tongue fall from his lips.

"*Carajo!* here we have it. The search has been long, but it is ended at last. Now, Doctor Jack, we will see who laughs."

"Ha, ha!"

The Chilian officer starts as if shot, and, while still bending on one knee, twists his head around to see from whom this cachination proceeds. His dark face, as seen by the light from the lantern, gives every evidence of sudden fear, for, as we have seen, the man is not one in whom the blood of warriors runs.

To his amazement and consternation he looks upon the face of the one man he fears, the very Doctor Jack whom he had been deriding, and whom he has believed beaten in the race.

"Ah! Colonel Garcia, well met. You may not know you handle my property. I inform you of the fact. I ask you to drop that packet."

He says this so calmly that the Chilian somehow conceives the idea that he has terrorized the American; he assumes a ferocious frown that would cause a hireling to get down on his knees and cower; upon Jack it acts in an entirely different manner. He laughs.

"I refuse; unless you leave here suddenly you

will be pulverized, sir, demolished. You forget who I am—my reputation as a fire-eater——”

“Drop that packet!”

“Ah! it is already done, senor.”

The change in his deportment is as radical as it is sudden, and springs from a fact that has a direct bearing on the subject. Something which Doctor Jack holds in his hand has been brought to bear upon him. It shines in the light of the lantern, and has a wicked gleam. The colonel does not have to guess what it is, as he has had considerable experience with just such deadly toys.

“Kirke, secure our property. As for you, my brave colonel, suppose you wheel and face the other way. Forward march! Remember, to turn seals your doom!”

The Chilian soldier obeys. It goes against his grain to take orders from this Yankee whom he hates, but when the case is one of life and death, Leon Garcia is not the man to hesitate over trifles.

Down the street he marches, with the other keeping step in his rear. He knows he is covered by the weapon that holds six deaths, and hence does not even dare to turn his head. There is no need—the tramp of feet inform him that both Americans follow. Kirke has secured the packet and brings up the rear.

“Halt!”

The colonel draws up suddenly, and awaits his further orders. Chilian soldiers learn the manual well, and even the officers can in an emergency prove very docile.

“Pass down the street to the right. I shall watch you carefully, and as long as you are in sight you court death, if any disturbance is made. Go!”

In one minute the colonel with long strides has passed beyond the range of their vision. Then an outcry is heard—the Chilian officer is calling his men around him. Presently they will be swarming about the spot where the Yankees were last seen, very angry and determined on revenge.

By this time Doctor Jack and his sturdy companion will have put some distance between themselves and the point of danger. They lose not a second after Garcia has gone, but endeavor to make progress and at the same time avoid their enemies.

The Chilians keep up a great racket. It is understood that barking dogs do not bite as a general thing, and the more noise that is made, the better they are pleased. It gives them a pretty good idea of the location of their foes, and thus they may avoid them.

Once clear of the affair, they head for the rendezvous, intending to join the dude and Avis, when, everything having been arranged, the whole party can go on board the steamer which leaves Valparaiso at dawn.

As they approach the place selected as the rendezvous, Jack begins to feel anxious. Only one thing could occur to worry him now, and this is in connection with Avis. What if Lord Rackett has followed Larry and his charge from the hotel, and pounced upon them with a couple of hirelings? This would be a terrible condition of affairs. He groans as he reflects that he might possibly have managed to send Avis on board earlier. True, she rebelled against this, but had he been firm she would have yielded.

It is too late now, and regrets never mended anything. He can only hope for the best, and keep up

the brave heart that has carried Doctor Jack through many a scene of disaster and danger.

Evidently they have distanced Garcia and his wolves, for no sign of their presence is longer heard.

Now they reach the rendezvous, and Doctor Jack glances around, with a great fear oppressing his heart. Avis and Larry do not appear in sight. He even gives a little signal that his wife would know, but there comes only the silence of despair in response.

"Sure this is the place?" asks Kirke, uneasily.

"Positive. I wonder if Larry could have made a mistake. They may be near by," and eagerly he calls out the magic name of "Avis," at first in low tones, and then raising his voice until the cry can be heard thirty feet away.

Alas! the dead silence mocks him. He is in an agony of alarm, this man whom danger to himself can never daunt. Even yet he hates to believe the worst, but clings to a floating straw.

"If Larry misunderstood me and went to another place——" he begins.

"You're wrong. See, your wife has been here to a certainty," and Kirke holds up a dainty kid glove he has found.

At this Doctor Jack groans. Then feebly smiles as another ray of hope flashes into his mind.

"Yes, she's been here. I'd know her dainty glove anywhere"—kissing it rapturously—"but, you see, we're very late ourselves."

"That's true," returns the Texan, slowly, as though he does not exactly catch the meaning of his companion.

"No doubt they became tired."

"Of course."

"And alarmed."

"It would be quite natural."

"Larry may have concluded that the danger of waiting was too great, and determined to send my wife on board, when he could return to meet us."

It is singular how eagerly we seize upon things that are only half probable, when our hearts long to make them true. Really, Jack is beginning to believe this may be so, and that his wife is safe on board by this time.

Vain delusion.

It is Kirke again who steps upon this hope which he hugs to his heart. Kirke who utters a low cry and stoops to pick up something his foot has touched, and which shines in the heavenly light like polished silver.

"That settles it," he mutters, disconsolately.

"What have you found?" snaps Jack.

"Have you ever set eyes on such a play toy as that, before?" demands the Texan, and Doctor Jack, taking the object from his grasp, reverently handles it while he bravely suppresses a groan and simply says:

"It belonged to Avis—I gave it to her—something serious has happened, I fear."

Yes, something has indeed occurred.

CHAPTER XIV.

THANKS TO LARRY.

No blame can be attached to Larry, if things have gone wrong. He has followed the directions of Doctor Jack to the letter, and, reaching the spot appointed as a rendezvous in safety with Avis, has waited there for the coming of the man whose hand guides the vessel on which they sail.

It is just about the time when Jack should appear that they are suddenly brought face to face with danger. Without warning several men come upon them. The disagreeable voice of Lord Rackett sounds in their ears, and they realize that in some way their presence here has become known.

Larry makes a determined resistance, but he is set upon by a couple of wiry Chilians, who treat him rather roughly, determined to keep his hands secured, and prevent the use of any weapon.

Doctor Jack's wife has been equal to the occasion. When the English lord turns upon her he is just in time to dodge as she makes use of the small weapon she has drawn. Ere she can repeat the shot he has clutched her wrist, and the revolver falls to the ground.

She does not cry aloud for help, though her heart is swelling with indignation. If Jack were only to appear, how he would make these cowards fly. These men who do not hesitate to wage war upon women.

Larry has been overcome in spite of his brave

resistance. Why they do not knock him on the head and leave him there is strange; but possibly they have a use for the dude, or it may be they fear to let this evidence of their work remain behind.

It is also evident that they anticipate the coming of Doctor Jack at any moment. The manner of the Englishman declares this, for he seems to be on the *qui vive*, and will not allow his revolver to remain in his pocket.

When they move away with the prisoners, it certainly looks dark, indeed, for Jack and his fortunes. Even a delay will lose him the chance of sailing, and this alone brings new dangers upon them from the league whose infamous net has been spread for his feet.

"Where are you taking us? By what authority do you act?" Avis demands, facing the man who has once been her friend, and even now seeks to win her by force, she the beloved wife of another.

"Have patience—you will see. I am in with the authorities in Valparaiso, and have good reason to arrest you——" he says, when she bursts out with:

"Arrest me. Do you mean that, sir?"

"Yes, after the riot of this evening between the Yankee sailors and the people of this city, an American found in the streets, be it man or woman, is an object of suspicion, and subject to the order sent out from police headquarters."

"But you have another reason. You will not take me before the *Intendente Roujito*."

He laughs even while leading her away.

"I confess I only use that excuse as a cloak to hide my real feelings. I want you, Avis. I once swore to marry you, years ago, and you know a Briton never gives up."

"You are certainly crazy, Lord Plympton. You forget I am Doctor Jack's wife," she exclaims, wondering what manner of creature this man with the form of an Apollo and the heart of a Satan must be.

"His widow, rather," he remarks, soberly, at which she catches her breath, and says:

"You cannot deceive me. My husband is alive, and will soon avenge his wrongs," for her wifely confidence in the ability of Jack to take care of himself and those who need his protection is unlimited.

"It's all the same. You will soon be his widow. Then, by the aid of a friendly *padre* whom I know, I will make you Lady Plympton"—she gives a gesture of disgust which causes him to emit one of his hearty English laughs—"by Jove! now, it isn't every American girl that would turn up her nose at the honor, I assure you."

"Perhaps at one time I might not have been entirely indifferent to it, but two things make such a choice impossible now. In the first place, I am a wife, and again, I have seen under the mask you used to wear. I know your true nature, and death would be preferable to mating with one so vile."

He sneers at her words, and, when Larry bravely puts in a sentence, dashes his hand into the face of the little man, almost knocking his front teeth out.

"That was brave of you. How I despise a man who can strike one not his match," exclaims Avis, bitterly.

"Let him keep quiet, then. I will not allow wasps to sting me!" but from his manner it is evident the big Briton is ashamed.

Larry has learned wisdom, and keeps his peace, but at the same time his brain is busy with many

thoughts. To outwit this scoundrel now Larry would give years of his life, or anything he possessed and cherished.

So they proceed in the direction of the water, much to the surprise of the dude. He worries over the problem of how he can get word to Jack. It looks exceedingly dark for them, but his nature is hopeful, and he constantly expects something favorable to turn up.

His curiosity is aroused when they come in sight of the water, and the question at once arises as to the point of destination before them. Milord chafes because the boat he expects to find here is not in sight.

"The fellow has had plenty of time to reach the place—perhaps he's above or below—come, scatter and hunt. Gomez and Juan remain with the prisoners. On your lives do not let them go."

While the rest hunt for the boat, Juan, who holds a wicked looking weapon in his hand, and grasps Larry's arm tenaciously, bends his head close to the dude's ear to whisper:

"Senor, your Doctor Jack is rich, is he not?"

"Immensely so," returns Larry, in the same thrilling tone, and at once he begins to believe the chance he awaited has come.

"He would reward a poor devil of a Chilian soldier of fortune, if I should be instrumental in saving his wife?"

"Man, he would make your fortune. All depends on our leaving this place by morning. Let me go so that I may knock Gomez over the bank into the water, and I will promise you anything, and see that you have it, too."

"No, no; I could not do that. He would know

who was to blame. I fear the Englishman. What good would a thousand reals do Juan Bartello, if his life pays the penalty?"

"What do you propose, then?" in agony lest the Englishman return too soon.

"You have paper—pencil?"

"Yes, yes."

"Write a line to this wonderful Doctor Jack. Say, 'trust the bearer fully.' Then tell me where I may find him. I shall be sent on a message by my employer when he leaves in the boat. I will bring your friend here."

"Heaven be praised!" mutters the little man.

With feverish haste, he takes out an envelope—a pencil. On the back of the paper he writes as well as the lack of light allows:

"Trust the bearer. We are in milord's hands on edge of harbor, waiting for boat."

Then he signs his name.

There is no need to say "come quickly," for Doctor Jack will fly as though he had wings when he receives this message.

"Conceal that—go to the place where we were captured—he will come," the New Yorker says, hastily pushing the note into his hand.

"And my reward, senor. Remember, I take my life into my hands."

"A thousand reals, you say?"

"Surely it is worth it."

"Yes, and more. Put your hand into this pocket and remove the purse. One-third of what you ask is in it—some one else would get it presently, anyhow—better the man who is my friend."

"They come, senor."

"Juan, you will do what you promise?"

"Si, senor; I owe him one for a past offense. Some day Juan may pay in full. Besides, it is a chance of a life-time to make a fortune. Yes, I will bring your Doctor Jack here."

The arrival of the others prevents further conversation, but Larry feels better. Given some time and he believes all must be well.

From the growls of the Englishman it is evident that they have not found the boat which they seek; but as luck will have it, even at this moment it heaves in sight.

This mollifies milord, who hails the two men in the craft, directing them where to pull up on the little beach.

Then he directs several of his followers to enter, leading the prisoners. With Juan he remains in consultation a short time, after which the Chilian hurries away. Larry has a thought or two in connection with this same Juan that does not give him the greatest pleasure in the world, but just at present he is engaged with other matters.

The boat holds them all comfortably, and fortunately the harbor is stirred by no violent nor'wester such as kicks up such a sea in this rather dangerous place.

Avis has said nothing. She controls her feelings in a wonderful way, though of necessity alarmed at the situation. Some of her sex would be sobbing. She chances to be made of sterner material. Her association with Jack Evans has given her even more qualities of bravery than nature bestowed.

The two men who row the boat are sailors.

Larry pays attention and discovers that they are British tars. They show the greatest respect for the

nobleman, and this, with their neat uniform, gives Larry an idea that sends a cold shudder through his frame.

He conceives a horrible fancy that gives promise of being a truth. This rich Englishman probably has a yacht anchored in the harbor. When they are aboard anchor will be heaved, and everything at Valparaiso left behind. At their leisure they can proceed to hang him to a yard-arm, or toss him overboard.

The dude feels desperate. Already he can see the outlines of a vessel ahead. It is while he is in this strain that fortune suddenly throws a chance in his way to at least create a disturbance. He finds a large cork in the bottom of the boat under a thwart, and calmly pulls it out. The water at once rushes into the boat, which, being overloaded, almost immediately begins to sink. Shouts ring out on the night air, and in another moment the boat goes down, leaving them all struggling in the salty waters of Valparaiso harbor.

CHAPTER XV.

LARRY DECLINES TO BE LEFT BEHIND.

The situation is a dramatic one, and has been brought about so suddenly that there is no time to prepare for it.

Hence all are plunged into the water. Larry Kennedy has expected such an event, and is prepared. All the others, being taken by surprise, flounder about as though they are so many porpoises, for even good swimmers may be taken unawares.

Avis is in the water, battling bravely for her life, when Larry assists her. He has seized upon one of the oars dropped by the sailor who had had it in his charge, and this he thrusts into her hands, calling out brave words in her ear.

"Fight hard for it, Avis, dear Avis. I did it to save you," is what he cries.

"Did what?" she splutters, for the water somehow manages to splash into her mouth.

"Pulled the big plug out of the bottom of the boat. Head that way—the shore lies there. Tell me if you get tired out. Cousin Larry is here to support you. Keep up a brave heart, and think of Jack."

Wise Larry—that head of yours contains the elements that go to make up a statesman. At the mention of Jack's name Avis seems to receive new life, just as he knew she would.

An extraordinarily good swimmer, Avis would have made for the shore like a fish only that her dress hinders her progress. She can, with the aid

of the oar, keep afloat, but that is almost the extent of it.

Larry, paddling along at her side, casts an occasional glance behind. The lights of the city beckon them on, while in their rear signs of a commotion are not lacking, for the men flounder in the water, and the voice of the British lion is heard roaring out commands, calling upon those on the vessel to lower boats and come to the rescue.

Of course, with the first outcry the yacht has become alive with sailors, and already a couple of boats have been dropped and are being speedily manned.

Larry hopes much from the friendly darkness. One thing gives him much worry—the tide is strong at this point, and threatens to carry them past the rocks and out to sea—into the surf that pounds upon the beach beyond. He can feel that its force is hard to resist, and knows it will be a toss-up as to whether they reach the point, or are swept past.

Now the rescuers have arrived upon the scene, and the splashing men are lifted out of the water. The boat did not sink when relieved of the weight that was in it, but as a waterlogged craft, floated, allowing the whole of them a chance to hold on and remain above the surface. Hence none were drowned.

As soon as milord sees the last one picked up, he starts an inquiry:

“What happened? Were we run into?” he demands, and only one sailor can answer.

“No, sir. I heard water rushing in through the bottom, and while I hung on to the boat I investigated. Some fellow drewed the plug, and as it was extra big she filled at once.”

"Who sat over the plug, Jenson?"

"That queer little chap, my lord."

"I seen him a-bendin' down just before we took the plunge, my lord," declares the other sailor, eagerly, for they fear it may be put down as negligence on their part.

The other gives a tremendous oath.

"That settles it. Larry Kennedy is at the bottom of this. Therefore he has not drowned. They are making off. Give me that lantern. Return to the yacht with those shivering rats, and the sunken boat. Secure plenty of lights, and come back in force. Search every yard between here and the point. By Jove! she shall not escape me."

Thus is the bull-dog pertinacity shown in this British subject. He will hang on to the last. The boat shoots forward, impelled by the swift strokes of the rowers, and in the bow crouches the dripping figure of milord, holding a lantern in one hand and shielding his eyes from its direct rays with the other, as he scans the surface of the water for signs of the fugitives.

He is a shrewd fellow, this Lord Rackett, and does not search at random, but notices the play of the tide, and gives a close calculation as to where Larry and his charge must have drifted while endeavoring to make the shore.

Once they pass the swimmers, just out of range, and fail to discover them, for which Larry is thankful. He still has hopes of making the tongue of land, and even if this fails it might be better to be swept out to death than fall into the hands of their enemy. If the worst came, Larry would call out, believing half a loaf is better than no bread, and that there must always be a chance of Jack's arrival.

The boat has turned again. Once more it heads in their direction, with that gigantic figure looming up in the bow, waving the lantern and shouting directions.

This time fate leads them across the line which Larry is endeavoring to make for the point. It is just as well, for Avis cannot hold out much longer, and already the dude realizes that only a strong swimmer could battle successfully against that current which insidiously but surely drags them toward the surf.

With a certain amount of calmness, then, he awaits the discovery. One might look for something of the same complacency in a stoical red man of the forest going to his fate, and in his little birch-bark canoe nearing the awful brink of Niagara.

It comes at last, for the sharp eyes of the man who crouches in the bow of the boat discover him. There is a cry of triumph, and Lord Rackett calls upon his men to pull all together with a will, just as though he fears that the fugitives will again elude his vision.

So the boat comes alongside and Larry reaches Avis toward them, signifying that he would have her taken in before they pay any attention to him. Thus Doctor Jack's wife once more finds herself in the power of the man she has learned to hate and fear. The Englishman tosses an overcoat brought from the yacht to one of his men, who wraps it around the wet figure of Avis. She is grateful for this kindness, and thanks the man sweetly.

"Give way for the yacht!" says Lord Rackett, placing the lantern under a seat, so that its light will no longer dazzle the men's eyes.

"But, milord——"

"Well, Bailey," with a yawn.

"The man who is in the water, sir——"

"Leave him there. We are loaded."

"He will be unable to get to shore, milord."

"What the duse do I care. He is in the water by his own choice. Gave us all this trouble, confound him. Now, I hope he's satisfied. Pull for the yacht, Captain Bailey."

"Lord Rackett, I beg that you will not desert my cousin," Avis forces herself to say, but she gets poor satisfaction.

"He made his bed. Let him lie in it. For the yacht, my hearties," is his response.

No more is said, and the boat speedily leaves the spot where the fugitives have been found.

If the Briton expects Larry Kennedy to tamely submit to such a cruel fate, he certainly counts without his host. The little New Yorker cares to continue his existence about as well as the next one, and will make a determined fight against such a decree. To remain where he is means death in the breakers along shore outside the harbor, or should he in some way escape this, he must drift out to sea, and perhaps become the prey of some hungry shark.

No, thank you, such a destiny has no charms in the eyes of Larry. He is ready to fight again for his life.

Thanks to his quick intellect, he is able to see a chance immediately. The boat swings past him in the darkness, actually bumping his head in its passage. Larry puts out a hand and catches hold of the rudder, to which he clings with a tenacious grip, and is thus towed along as the boat, urged by the powerful strokes of the sailors, heads toward the

yacht, on which can be seen a bright beacon intended to serve as a guide.

The rudder not being used, no one discovers the presence of the little New Yorker, who holds on with the tenacity of his species, and although almost half-drowned at times, manages to keep his position until the yacht is reached.

Then, fearing discovery, he leaves his place and swims along the side of the vessel, until he reaches the bow, where he finds first of all a place to rest, hanging on to a rope that dangles from the deck, and also a chance to board the craft when the time is at hand.

All soon becomes quiet on board the little vessel that rides to her anchor in the harbor of Valparaiso.

Avis has been taken in charge by the wife of the captain, who is on board—a matronly English woman, who fears Lord Rackett about as much as she does Satan. At any rate, she supplies dry clothes to Doctor Jack's wife, who is in sad need of such attention after being nearly half an hour in the water.

There is no movement made with regard to getting the yacht underway. Perhaps a lack of wind may account for this, or some other reason that originates in the owner's brain.

He relies a great deal upon the protection afforded by the British Union Jack which flies from his vessel. That flag has led many a forlorn hope, won many a great victory, and oftentimes shielded persecuted people, for back of it is the strong arm of the English people; but on more occasions than one has it been used by unprincipled persons to hide their villainy.

Larry Kennedy grows tired of hanging there in

the bow, and he makes up his mind he would like to go aboard the craft. True, he has no invitation, and if discovered is apt to be treated roughly, perhaps tossed overboard, but this prospect does not alarm him.

He proceeds to investigate his position and learn how it may be bettered. Five minutes later he is seated on the chain of the left bower anchor, which is not in use, the chain making a loop that hangs half-way to the water.

Here Larry remains some time in order that his clothes may drip. The sounds are drowned in the gurgle and splash of the outgoing tide against the bow and sides of the yacht.

At length, when he feels that he has, in a measure, dried out, Larry proceeds to his next move, which, of course, is to crawl on board. He has one hope—that Juan will find Doctor Jack and bring him upon the scene. Once this man reaches the yacht, he will raise a terrible row, and woe to him who tries to stand between an infuriated husband and his own.

What Larry fears, most of all, is that the wind may come up and the vessel get away. It will ruin all his hopes and plans, and he finally crawls aboard in the hope of being able to prevent such a catastrophe.

CHAPTER XVI.

TAKING THE BULL BY THE HORNS.

At the moment when Larry crawls over the bow of the yacht it happens that no one is near. A light or two burn in their respective places, but the deck is in darkness.

Back toward the stern Larry can see several small bits of fire that glow periodically. These he knows are cigars, and it is evident that Lord Rackett and others are seated there enjoying themselves.

Larry does not care to remain on deck any longer than he can help, as the risk of detection is great. Besides, the one he seeks to benefit must be in the cabin.

He has been on yachts before now, and knows how to get below. It is only a question of avoiding any sailor men who may be on deck. He creeps along cautiously, holding his very breath at times, discovery seems so near, but favored by fortune manages to reach security under the deck.

The yacht is elegantly fitted out, and Larry, who has an eye for the beautiful, casts a glance of appreciation around him.

There are two state-rooms connecting with the cabin, and also superior accommodations for the captain of the craft. What Larry now wishes to discover is the room Avis occupies.

Undoubtedly it will be locked. He looks at the doors and sees a key in each, tries the nearest and

discovers it fast. This decides him. Gently he knocks, but at first no notice is taken of his effort.

Finally he unlocks the door, and gives a sharp rap upon the panel, following it up by immediately secreting himself behind an easy-chair that happens to be near by.

The result proves the wisdom of his maneuvers, for hardly has he crouched there before the state-room door opens, and a head appears.

It belongs to Doctor Jack's wife.

Larry, delighted, at once shows himself to the intense satisfaction of his cousin, but before a word can be said, heavy steps are heard drawing near. The dude makes a quick gesture, and Avis in obedience closes the door.

At the same time Larry drops and curls himself up back of the chair. There are times when it is a positive advantage to be small, as he realizes just at this moment.

Some one enters the cabin. He can hear the party moving about, and venturing to make an observation discovers—milord.

Larry regrets that he is unarmed, and the next glance he gives around the walls is in search of some weapon, for he hates this man, and means to come between him and his prisoner.

Lord Rackett walks up and down the cabin a number of times. Then he opens a closet in a corner, and takes out a decanter, from which, selecting a bottle, he fills a glass, makes a movement with his hand toward the door of the state-room as though drinking to the health of the fair occupant, and gulps the liquor down.

Larry feels better.

He has just discovered in the corner back of him

what appears to be an oddity. The best he can make of it is an Australian boomerang; but in his eyes it assumes the functions of a plain, every-day cudgel.

How eagerly his hand goes out to it, and with what intense joy he clutches the hard wood. A thump with such a crooked weapon must give a man a headache for hours.

Now, let milord have a care, or he will be "blown up with his own petard," for the dude is on the war-path.

It is far from Larry's intention to disclose his presence, unless it is absolutely necessary. He would much rather accomplish his work through strategy than force, but as a last resort is ready to appeal to arms.

Whenever the British subject is about to turn his way, he ducks his head out of sight. The vast dimensions of the chair allow him a good chance for hiding.

Lord Rackett marches up and down as though endeavoring to frame a plan of action; he has numerous things to worry over. It is not often his lordship's head is troubled, and the unusual exertion exhausts the poor man.

So he throws his ponderous weight into an easy-chair. By some freak of fate it chances to be the one behind which poor Larry has taken up his temporary quarters. By another miserable streak of ill-luck the thing is on rollers. Ordinarily, this fact would have little or no significance, but a combination of circumstances makes it assume a peculiar prominence just now.

As milord thus roughly drops into the chair his weight causes it to roll backward, and Larry's un-

fortunate head is squeezed between the chair and the cabin wall.

Involuntarily the dude lets forth a yell that would put the whistle of a steam tug to shame. It is impossible to help it under the circumstances, much as Larry would give to avoid such a betrayal of his presence.

Milord gets up. His movements can only be likened to the spasmodic leap an electric current would bring about. Perhaps the wildest fancies flash through his brain, as he thus madly springs out of the chair.

Knowing full well that the game is up, Larry no longer attempts concealment. The pain he has just suffered also urges him on to attack the other.

He rushes out with the whirling boomerang, to the utter astonishment of Lord Rackett, who fully believes the dude to be drowned ere now, or at least fighting for his life out on the ocean.

"You!" he gasps.

"Yes, me. Who else would you have? I've come to haunt you, miserable wretch. Do you hear, you're doomed—doomed!"

With each repetition of that last word Larry aims a vicious blow at the head of the big Briton. The whirling boomerang, looking for all the world like a writhing snake, passes so close to his head that he can hear the whistling sound it makes, which increases his alarm.

Nor does Larry stop with threats. He means to test his novel weapon upon the aristocratic skull of the Briton, and pursues his tactics with this end in view.

After a couple more ineffectual blows he finally succeeds in bringing the boomerang with a resound-

ing whack against milord's head. The Englishman at once drops like a bullock in the shambles, but immediately scrambles to his feet and dashes out of the cabin.

Larry does not follow; Larry has his hands full as it is, without rushing on deck to assail the whole crew.

He is left master of the cabin, but this will not be for long. That boomerang cannot keep the sailors who man the yacht at bay, wicked though it looked in the eyes of the English nobleman.

Larry realizes this, and is quick to make up his mind how he should act. What he wants, most of all, is a weapon, but his first act before he does anything else is to slam the cabin door shut, and shoot a bolt he finds into its socket.

This will give him a breathing spell and a chance to look around. The walls are hung with some strange weapons the owner of the yacht has picked up in his wanderings, but none of them strike Larry as being adapted to his purpose. He wants something with which he is more familiar than the *yata-ghan* of an Arab, or the war-club of a South Sea Islander, though it must be confessed he did a remarkably clever job with the boomerang.

He darts to the door of the second state-room, and flings it open. As he suspected, this is the apartment belonging to milord himself, and here he is apt to find what he seeks.

One of the first things he discovers is a revolver and a box of cartridges lying on a shelf, and the eagerness with which he seizes upon them is proof of his earnestness. Then he again seeks the cabin. It is time, too, for already loud blows can be heard upon the door, telling that the men have obeyed

milord's call for help, and are eager to burst the door open in order to accomplish their end.

Larry deliberately fires several bullets through the panels of the door. It is not apparent what damage his lead does, but the pounding stops.

This allows another breathing spell, which will not be for long. The British sailors are not to be put off, and they will soon return to the attack, breaking the door in. Perhaps some may enter by means of the window at the stern, which can be reached from without.

Larry has a chance to leap into the water through this opening, but does not care to avail himself of it.

Having come hither and endured these hardships with a purpose in view, he does not mean to seek his own safety in flight—at least, not yet.

Again he turns to the state-room door and knocks. It is once more opened by Avis, who greets him with a smile.

Perhaps she has been a witness of the encounter in the cabin, and her reception is that accorded a victor. At any rate, Larry feels six inches taller than before.

"What can we do?" she asks, hastily.

Larry has set to work examining the thickness of the state-room door.

"Quite a sturdy affair. We might hold out behind that until Jack comes."

His idea is, of course, for defense. If they can keep the enemy at bay for a certain length of time, Doctor Jack may arrive on the scene; and once he shows up the chances for winning must be increased a dozen fold.

"Look here, what's this?" he cries, bending over

a small yacht cannon of brass, with wheels under the blocks, and some shells in a cup attached.

At sight of this weapon Larry is seized with a stupendous idea. He drags it into the state-room, and then bars the door.

Although not a soldier or gunner by profession, Larry has some knack with various utensils of war, and readily comprehends how the yacht cannon should be loaded. He finds the shells blank cartridges for firing salutes, but it will be easy to slip some rusty nails or other missiles into the grim throat of the little brass monster, and thus make it a terrible weapon.

By this time the assault on the door of the cabin has begun again, and it speedily gives way with a crash.

Men rush through, and in a short time a hand violently shakes the door of the state-room, behind which stands Larry, coolly arranging his yacht cannon for business, while at his side is Doctor Jack's wife, her flashing blue eyes speaking defiance to the mob that hammers madly for admittance.

CHAPTER XVII.

OVER THE WATER TO VALPARAISO LIGHTS.

"Silence!" roars the lion-like voice of the big Englishman, and his men cease their chattering, for his word is law.

Then comes a single kick at the door.

"Within there, Yankee."

"Well, what d'ye want?" demands Larry, not forgetting his usual aggravating drawl.

"Come out and surrender, Mr. Kennedy."

"Thanks, awfully."

"We'll send you safely to the shore. I give you my word for it."

"Alone?"

"Of course."

"I have a lady in my charge."

"She remains on the Bull-Dog."

"So do I," laconically adds Larry.

He can imagine the look of disgust upon the face of the Briton, when he finds his demands thus met by a flat refusal.

"You understand that we can break this door in as we did the other, and I have six men back of me to enforce my orders."

"Six—is that all your crew—only six?"

Larry seeks information, and this is the way he expects to get it. The plan succeeds, for milord imagines he is giving in.

"The rest of them are away on shore. It would

be folly to think of resisting us. Open, then, and cause no delay."

"Couldn't think of it, weally now."

"Then the door shall be broken in, and you need expect no mercy."

"The first man who strikes that door may sink the yacht. Listen, Lord Rackett, I'm a desperate man. I have the means to carry out my threats."

"Humbug! you Yankees can boast," sneers the man on the other side.

"Look around. Do you miss anything in the cabin, my dear fellow?"

"Great Scott! the brass gun!"

"Exactly. I have it in here trained on the door, and loaded to the muzzle with nails, revolver cartridges, and trash. When I fire it will tear the whole side of your boat out. Now, order your men to break in the door."

There is a tone of triumph visible in the dude's address. Though still in a bad position, he at least holds the power in his hand, and is far from whipped.

His information causes some consternation among the sailors, and no doubt there is a scattering on their part to get out of range. Perhaps they know the qualities that distinguish this gun. At any rate, the threatened attack fails to materialize.

Some other means will be adopted to bring the mutineer to terms; but Larry does not sleep, and he is accomplishing at least one good thing in the passage of time.

Every minute counts, since it gives Doctor Jack a better chance to reach the scene, and that is the event Larry depends upon. He goes to the little bull's-eye window at the side of the state-room a number of times and looks out. Blackness meets

his gaze, though he can see the lights of Valparaiso over the watery space that separates them.

Is Jack Evans coming?

Perhaps this man Juan, who offered to serve him in such a strange way, is really deep in the service of the Briton. He may even have assumed a mask in order to insnare Doctor Jack.

As time passes, Larry becomes more and more uneasy. He wonders what the enemy is at. They have certainly not given up the game, for as yet it lies pretty much in their hands. All they have to do is to find a way of grasping the case.

Their very silence convinces him that something is on the *tapis*. There has been a light in the state-room, but he extinguishes it, for fear lest some one may fire a shot through the bull's-eye window, that may be fatal.

In the darkness they wait. Larry has explained all he knows to Avis, and she is as much in hope of seeing Jack arrive on the scene as the dude can be, for her confidence in him is amazing.

"When Jack comes it will be all right," she says more than once, and such sublime faith in a man is little short of wonderful.

Larry keeps himself prepared, and should an attack be made upon the door, he will give the aggressors much more than they bargain for. Nor does he neglect the opening through which gleam Valparaiso lights, dancing along the waves between.

When he looks out for, perhaps, the tenth time, eagerly listening for some sound that would indicate the coming of Jack, he receives a thrill. Surely a moving object obscured the light just on the shore for a moment, and this could only be a boat.

His pulses quicken and hope is revived. Straining

his eyes, he awaits the development of events. While thus glancing over the dark water, he becomes conscious of a movement near by. It is not Avis, though she stands at his side watching for the coming of the man she loves. Larry is quick to comprehend the significance of the sound, and realizes that it means new danger to himself and Avis.

His enemies have been secretly at work and mean mischief. First he sees a pair of legs dangling between the sky and himself, and evidently feeling for the support of the bull's-eye.

Larry takes this as an insult, an infringement on his rights, and accordingly he resents it.

In some way or other he has become possessed of a knife. It has been used as a carver at the Englishman's table, and has a buck-horn handle with a silver butt, the blade being a foot long and coming to a cimeter point—quite a formidable weapon in the hands of a desperate and determined man.

Reaching this out when the dangling limbs come within easy reach, Larry begins to prod them with the point of the knife. It is sharp enough to pierce through the garments of the dangling adventurer and produce a painful stab.

Each movement on the part of the dude is accompanied by a yell from the object of his tender solicitude, and the gyrations executed by that pair of legs were certainly never equaled on any dancing floor.

Finally, when the fellow is about to drop into the water of the harbor to save his life, his comrades above comprehend the situation and draw him up sadly demoralized.

That game has proved a bad failure, and some-

thing else must be devised, if they hope to accomplish their end.

Having disposed of this matter, Larry can now pay attention to other things, and he uses both eyes and ears in the endeavor to see what may be going on over the water. Was it a boat he had a glimpse of, or did his eyes deceive him? Even if a boat, could the occupants be Kirke Smith and Doctor Jack.

So he waits, eagerly, anxiously.

Avis, to whom he has communicated his hopes, makes a suggestion that seems wise, and Larry thereupon lights the lamp in the bracket on the wall. Its rays, shining through the bulls-eye window, will attract the eye of the man whose coming they so anxiously await; the man who seeks his own, and whose coming will cause consternation on board the tight little British yacht when he boards her.

Those above are not yet done. They cudgel their brains to devise means whereby the determined occupants of the state-room shall be forced to surrender.

Suddenly an object swings in through the small open window and drops on the floor.

Immediately they perceive a horrible odor, which arises from a smoldering bundle of rags. It is something intensely disagreeable, and calculated to make one's head swim inside of sixty seconds or less.

Of course, the idea of those who have conceived this brilliant scheme is that, driven by the gas and odor to seek fresh air, the occupants of the state-room will immediately unfasten the door and stagger into the cabin.

Larry somehow is overcome at once. He gives a positive howl of anguish as the fearful odor strikes him, and curls up on the floor like a wounded bear.

Only for the bravery of Doctor Jack's wife they might be smothered then and there. Her quick woman's conception realizes what is to be done. Without wasting a second, she snatches a towel, holds her breath, throws the cloth over the smoking bundle of rags, snatches the whole thing off the floor, and tosses it through the bull's-eye window.

"Saved!" gasps little Larry, rising to a sitting position, for he has witnessed the whole performance, though too weak to take part in it.

Still gasping he reaches the opening, and sucks in some fresh air. It is hard to tell what manner of scheme their enemies will next concoct. Larry is beginning to realize that he is fighting men who do not give up in a hurry.

"We can prevent that sort of business easily," he says, closing the bull's-eye, but the air is so full of gas that he is compelled to partially open it again or suffocate.

"Never could stand the least gas, Cousin Avis. Makes my head spin like a top," he says, as if endeavoring to apologize for the undignified and sudden manner in which he went to the floor when the terrible odor came in at the window; but Avis, brave Avis, who possesses much of the spirit that animates her husband, and never despairs, flashes a bright smile toward her cousin and answers cheerily.

Then they fall to watching again. It is not long before Larry's attitude gives rise to the idea that he has heard something besides the lapping of the waves against the side of the little yacht.

"Is that a mouse, Avis?" he demands.

Listening, she hears nothing.

"Jove! it must have heard me and stopped. Wonderful creatures these rats on shipboard."

"Rats! Do you think it can be that?" and the woman who can face the gravest danger in the world without flinching shudders and turns pale as the sounds Larry heard come distinctly to her ears.

Then she suddenly smiles.

"Cousin Larry, rats do not work so methodically. Listen, and you can count the number of taps. It is as if some one hammered gently on the partition. Perhaps our friends, the enemy, have another plan on the *tapis*."

"Jove! d'ye know what it makes me think of?" bursts out Larry—"a telegraph sounder at——"

He says no more, for Avis has given a sudden startled cry—a new expression flashes over her face—she bends her head to listen. Now the gentle taps, short and long, come from a point close to her ear, as though they are being delicately hammered on the vessel's side. Suddenly Doctor Jack's wife looks up, smiling:

"This is what it says, Cousin Larry: 'Avis, I am here. Jack.'"

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHAT HAPPENED ON DECK.

At receiving this information, Larry is quite delighted. He suddenly remembers that Doctor Jack chanced to be an operator in his youthful days, and that having taught Avis how to send and receive fairly well when they were first married, they used to have considerable fun out of the affair.

Now this knowledge gives promise of bearing practical fruits.

Avis is all excitement. The fact that this series of gentle tappings, not unlike the wash of the waves against the side of the vessel, constitute a message from her husband—that Jack is really within a yard of where she stands—causes her untold satisfaction.

Looking around she sees the carver just where Larry dropped it when the gas overpowered him. She seizes hold of it, and upon the side of the state-room beats answering signals. The wind has arisen and whistles through the cordage of the rigging, so that one on deck would not be apt to notice these sounds unless his ear chanced to be educated to the Morse alphabet.

Larry listens with a positive grin upon his face. It is all Greek or Choctaw to him, but he knows Avis is talking with her husband, and the fact of Doctor Jack's presence inspires the little man with lively emotions.

So he waits with patience the termination of this strange conversation, waits until Avis turns upon him eagerly, to say:

"They are here in a boat, their presence unsuspected. If we could only pass through the opening in safety we might elude the vigilance of our foes, but"—with a shudder—"that is simply impossible—you might succeed, but I should die in the attempt. The question is, what shall be done?"

Larry smites his head with his fingers, as though he would thus arouse his thoughts. The endeavor seems successful, too.

"Jove! I've an idea, Cousin Avis," he exclaims.

"Let us have it quickly, then," she says, for Larry is just as apt to lose it again before it can be communicated.

The little man shoots her a reproachful glance, as though he hardly thinks she treats him fairly.

"It's evident that we can't leave this yacht until we've conquered those on board, and I purpose doing that same thing," he says, soberly.

She looks at him, amazed.

"Alone, Larry?"

There are six or seven men opposed to them, perhaps even more. The fellow whose legs Larry so neatly punctured would surely count for two in an engagement, his rage being at white heat. Larry, opposed to such a force, must go down like a tree before the gale.

The dude, however, has looked farther ahead.

"You can communicate with Jack. Tell him to be ready to board the yacht at the first shot. By Jove! he'll know what to do after that."

"You mean to go on deck?" she asks, uneasily.

"If I can get there."

"And leave me alone? What shall I do if they try to break in the door?"

"Pull the string. The cannon will do the rest, my dear Avis," grins Larry.

"Then go, in Heaven's name."

She is uneasy. It is not of herself Avis thinks, but of her husband. Jack will soon be engaged in a desperate struggle with men who seek his life, and deep down in her heart she prays that he may be preserved to her—that no wretched bullet will seek him out for a victim.

"You will fasten the door after me, Avis?"

"Yes—yes."

"And remember, if they try to break in——"

"They will regret it," and the determination in her voice speaks louder than words.

Larry gives her a look calculated to express his admiration, and then flits over to the door, casting a grim glance at the brass cannon that bears upon him, for no one knows better than Larry what its gaping mouth contains, and the terrible execution it will do when discharged.

He listens first of all, but can hear no sound from the cabin that would indicate the presence of foes. Avis is tapping gently once more on the wall, sending a message to the one whose ear is pressed against the side of the yacht, drinking it in, while his companion, no doubt, holds the boat to her place.

The darkness which Larry more than once has growled against now proves their best friend in time of need.

Avis turns around and nods.

"Is it all arranged?" he whispers, eagerly.

"Yes—he will be there—don't fear."

Larry kisses his hand to her gallantly, and then cautiously unfastens the door, holding his revolver, fully charged and ready for business.

As the opening increases in size he can see into the cabin, and notes the fact that it appears to be deserted. Now he pokes his head out to make a more extended survey before venturing wholly beyond the threshold.

At the same moment a head is thrust out from the door on the opposite side, belonging to the second state-room. A head doubtless connected with the body of a British seaman placed on duty here to guard the besieged Yankee.

They glare at each other for a moment, but Larry is not to be so easily balked in his plans, so he slowly raises his hand until it is on a line with the fellow's head.

What it contains seems to give new life to the apparently paralyzed man opposite, for he suddenly utters a gurgling cry of alarm, draws his head in as might a mud-turtle, and slams the door. No doubt behind it he at once prepares to resist boarders, determined to do or die on the spot if the terrible little Yankee endeavors to follow him.

Larry smiles serenely, steps over, locks the door, and puts the key in his pocket. By this brilliant flank movement he has reduced the number of the enemy from six to five. Fortune favors the brave, and Larry is happy.

Already Avis has closed the door after him, and secured it, so that Larry finds his bridges burned behind. It is just what he wants. "Makes a fellow desperate, you know," he is accustomed to remark when speaking of the matter later.

He turns and leaves the cabin behind. The foes

whom he seeks to disable are on deck, and there the battle must be fought that will decide the question as to who will have possession of Doctor Jack's wife.

A minute later and Larry's head pushes up above the deck as he ascends the companion-way, having made his passage forward.

Voices sound near him, and he can distinguish every word. Lord Rackett and the captain of the yacht are talking. The British lord is in a towering passion because half the crew are ashore, when they should be aboard every night at nine. He even threatens to clap on sail, and, taking advantage of the favorable breeze, desert the sailors on shore.

Larry can guess whence his eagerness to quit Valparaiso arises. Lord Rackett fears the vengeance of an outraged husband; he dreads lest at any moment the figure of Doctor Jack may rise up in front of him, calling to account the man who stole his wife.

Using his eyes to advantage, Larry counts the figures on the deck as seen by the light of the lanterns and the heavenly bodies. He makes out six still—that is, just two apiece all round.

"Well, here goes," mutters the dude, shutting his teeth hard, for Larry has never been a soldier, and is not accustomed to shooting down men on sight.

It requires a thought of the rascality which has been influencing these men to steel his nerves and render him fit for duty.

"They deserve death," he mutters, but all the same he aims low down, seeking to give a flesh wound that will place his victim *hors de combat*, which is all Larry asks.

The silence of the night is suddenly broken by the sharp report of a revolver. A jet of flame flashes up from the companion-way, and the fellow at whom the leaden messenger is sent, rolls upon the deck, hugging his leg, and almost delirious from the shock, for pain he certainly does not yet feel.

Of course, at this abrupt outbreak there is the utmost consternation on deck. Men call out and rush this way and that with a vague idea as to the source of the attack. Some have seen the flash of the weapon, and advance to overwhelm the marksman.

Larry is ready for business, and calculates that he can cut the number of their mess short when he fires again, as he will do just as soon as he can get the hammer of his fire-arm into position, for the weapon does not appear to work as well as it should.

That single shot has served as a signal.

Two human forms come tumbling on deck, clambering over the side of the yacht near the stern. As they gain their feet, the fact is established that these new-comers are above the medium in height, and possessed of extraordinary powers of locomotion to judge from the manner in which they advance.

This advent brings new cause for astonishment, since it has been so unexpected. The sailors seem to be between two fires, so to speak, and hardly know whether to turn upon those who rush down the deck with the fury of a mountain avalanche, or face the spot where belched forth the spiteful flash of flame that accompanied the telling shot.

When men are thus undecided, and caught in a trap, they are in a good condition to be easily beaten. It is almost as if they are already on the run.

Larry again comes to time—Larry, who has made up his mind to keep snapping the hammer of his faithless weapon until the revolving cylinder brings a cartridge within reach that will do its duty.

There is another report, and this time a bullet enters the arm of a British sailor man, who, armed with a belaying-pin or marline-spike, has rushed up to demolish the enemy lurking in the companion-way. It at least renders him less aggressive, since the arm that is stricken chances to be his right.

By this time the two flying figures have cleared the deck, and are upon the party. The stentorian voice of the English lord is heard, calling upon his men to rally and repel boarders. He is at least a man, though far from being a credit to his nation.

What will it avail? The man who dashes upon them has his iron arm doubly strengthened by the knowledge of his wrongs. He is like a tigress robbed of her whelps, and in her native jungle—a wounded lion at bay. A score of men would not dismay him now—might not overcome this young giant from the great republic of the north.

Besides, he is ably seconded by the man from Texas, Kirke Smith, who has tamed horses, chased Apaches and Mexican cattle-thieves, and lived a wild life on the great plains of the South-west.

CHAPTER XIX.

"YACHT AHOY!"

By this time Lord Rackett begins to realize something of the truth, which staggers him. He has taken note of the flying figures before now, but supposed they were some of his own men—that the boat from the Mole had returned with the delayed seamen.

It suddenly flashes upon him that this is not the case. Perhaps the rapidity of Doctor Jack's advance has something to do with this revelation, for not one of the yacht's sailors cares enough for the master of the vessel to thus approach with lion-like bounds.

Plympton realizes that his situation is inclined to be desperate, with enemies on both sides. He does not know what to make of the attack from the companion-way—whether it proceeds from one or more foes. He believes Larry to be still safe in the state-room, and here are more foes advancing.

No wonder he feels bewildered with danger from so many sources around him. He endeavors to turn the attention of his men to the new seat of war, and succeeds, in a measure, as they face that way.

Another instant and Doctor Jack is upon them. He comes with business in his frame and the determination to succeed in his eye. Who can resist such impetuosity?

Already two of the sailor men have been wounded

by the bullets of Larry Kennedy, and can hardly be called in the ring, which reduces the number of the enemy considerably. Larry does not jump up and show himself, for he believes such a small man would not figure in a hand-to-hand contest. Better leave it with those who know how to deal with such matters, and lying where he is, await the turn of events philosophically.

Doctor Jack, ably seconded by Kirke Smith, is now among his enemies. He strikes to avenge his wrongs, and those who come within range of his arms suffer the consequences. It is all so sudden that they have no time to prepare, and, taken off their guard, fall an easy prey to the aggressive American, who belabors them right and left.

Larry afterward declared that it reminded him of a ball bounding into the midst of the ten pins, and scattering them in every direction.

Here a man goes bowling over, sprawling his length upon the deck of the yacht. Just beyond, a second sailor endeavors to grapple with the man who is the cause of all this commotion, but Doctor Jack has no desire to seek close quarters, and stands the fellow off with the skill of a champion.

One there is who has cause for complaint, and this is Kirke Smith, who cannot see that Jack means to leave him any share in the little game. As for Larry, he enjoys the sight hugely. It is a rare treat with him to witness the discomfiture of the enemy, after his recent experience with them.

Doctor Jack, in the course of his energetic advance, finally runs against milord, who has not tried to beat a retreat, knowing that the only escape is to jump overboard, or else run below and hide, both of which alternatives he scorns to favor.

His stalwart figure bars Jack's triumphant way, and the two come in contact. Under ordinary circumstances the British bull-dog might have been something of a match for the American, but not now. Doctor Jack has been aroused to tiger-like ferocity by the abduction of his wife, and a dozen Lord Racketts could hardly stand before him.

The result is never for an instant in doubt. The Englishman has believed himself a master in the art of self-defense, but here he finds his guard broken down by the very impetuosity of Jack's attack, and himself beaten to the deck.

"All down!" sings out Larry, from his place of concealment, when the last man has thus given way before Doctor Jack's onset.

"Larry!" calls out the doctor, with a great wave of eagerness in his voice.

"On deck!" replies the dude, crawling over the top steps and gaining his feet, when he is immediately swooped down upon by a regular hurricane, as Jack clasps his arms around him.

Surely the lights of Valparaiso harbor never shone upon a more singular scene than the one that has just taken place.

"Avis?" springs from Jack's lips. She is the first thought in his mind.

"She is well—and safe behind a locked door," it gives Larry pleasure to say.

"Thank Heaven for that!" wells from the heart of the almost distracted husband.

Of course, his first thought now is to dive down into the cabin, and claim his own. Indeed, Doctor Jack has even taken a couple of steps in that direction when he comes to an abrupt pause.

There is cause.

Loud voices are heard over the side of the yacht, and, from this circumstance, he knows one of two things have occurred. Either a boat-load of sailors from some man-of-war, attracted by Larry's firing and the sound of conflict, have come to investigate, or else the missing seamen, belonging to the Briton's yacht, have returned at this unfortunate hour.

That the latter is the case Jack believes.

Here is another question rudely and suddenly brought forward for solution. These sort of emergencies test a man's caliber, and fortunately Doctor Jack is equal to them.

Lord Rackett has not been knocked senseless by the blow received, although partially stunned, and these voices reach his ear also. Then comes the hail:

"Yacht ahoy!"

He raises himself from the deck with one hand, a fierce joy taking the place of despair in his heart.

"This way, Danton! We are boarded! To the rescue, British bull-dogs! Ten pounds to every man, if you clear the decks!" he almost shrieks, in his delirium of rage.

The men in the act of clambering over the rail hear, as do their comrades still below in the boat. Probably they have only a vague idea as to the true state of affairs, but the sounds wafted over the water as they drew near the yacht must have warned them that something unusual was taking place. Besides, they have not sailed with milord all this time without discovering his weak points, and no doubt have been concerned in more than one affray on account of him.

His exceedingly liberal offer fires their blood. For

that amount they would assail even a trio of imps from Tophet.

After all the conflict has apparently only begun, and Doctor Jack has another engagement on his hands before he can claim the victory.

He realizes this, and instead of waiting to be attacked, rushes toward the men who are clambering over the rail. His advance is very like the impetuous sweep of a blizzard, and some of those in his way are apt to believe there is a strong comparison between the two.

This time Kirke is resolved to be in the game, and reaches the scene of action about as soon as his companion. He gives the first man he runs across a push that causes him to lose his balance and fall with a splash into the briny water.

The scene for a minute or so is a peculiar one. The sailors boarding the yacht pop up here and there in their desperate attempts to climb the rail. Some dodge back when one of the Americans rushes that way, while others endeavor to stand guard, and as a consequence are knocked into the water, from which they emerge, dripping wet, to crawl over at some more distant point.

The scene of disturbance gradually widens until it becomes impossible for the friends to take care of the rail longer. Their enemies will manage to crawl over in spite of them, and they must soon expect to be confronted on all sides, assailed hip and thigh.

Doctor Jack does not desire to use his revolver, save as a last resort. These men are British sailors, not African savages, and although in the service of a man for whom he has only detestation, still they are only doing their duty as hired seamen.

When he realizes that there promises to be a

sure general engagement, Jack calls to his companions, who spring to his side. His mind is upon Avis, and, when it is settled that they had better retreat, he immediately decides upon his course.

"Let us go below," is what he says.

The way to the cabin is close at hand, and from the threatening manner in which the sailors advance it is evident that whatever they expect to accomplish must be done speedily.

Larry leads, for his knowledge of the premises is such that he is in a position to take charge of his companions.

They have no trouble in reaching the interior of the cabin. Jack immediately closes and fastens the door, which is still in a serviceable condition.

"Keep watch, Kirke," is all he says, but the man from Texas knows what it means, and woe to the party who attempts to enter.

Doctor Jack turns upon Larry.

"Which door is it?" he asks, huskily.

"Wait—she may fire," warns the dude.

His eyes betray the answer to the question.

"Not when I can call out," returns Jack, as he bounds to the door.

"Avis—open!"

Her ears catch the tones. He can hear the glad expression she gives, the cry of intense joy that wells from the heart. Then trembling hands unlock the door. It swings open, and Doctor Jack clasps his own.

Tenderly he folds her in his arms, which have long been her shield, those strong arms against which the tidal waves of hate have beaten in vain.

Larry busies himself. He seizes hold of the little brass gun, and drags it into the cabin, where it

at once attracts the attention of the doctor and Kirke.

"What under the sun have we here?"

"Only a trifle, but it may keep the Britons out. I threatened 'em with it before."

"I see you've loaded it heavily. It may be more dangerous at the breech than the muzzle," says Jack, smiling, as his eyes fall upon the amazing variety of missiles that peep forth from the mouth of the cannon.

"No danger of that. I loaded for business. When it goes off this cwaft is doomed, by Jove!" declares Larry, proudly.

"Then let us delay the discharge as long as possible, since we have our present abode on board, and hardly care to go down to the bottom of the sea, or of Valparaiso harbor."

"Hark! what's that?" says Larry, suddenly.

All listen and can hear a variety of sounds, such as can have but one meaning.

"Getting underway," declares the Texan, uneasily.

"Then it is time we made a move," says Jack.

CHAPTER XX.

H O W T H E Y W O N .

This sudden change in the situation demands energetic measures to meet it. Once the yacht is underway, and out at sea, they will have no chance to escape. At least it will be a dozen times more difficult to accomplish.

Doctor Jack runs to the window in the stern, the same at which Larry used the point of his carver upon the legs of the dangling sailor.

Through this streams the light from the cabin, and he is enabled to see two boats astern—the one they have used in coming from the shore, and another.

If they were only safe in one of these, how thankful they would be. What pleasure it would afford them to head for the Mole, or, better still, the steamer that sails at daybreak.

Is it possible to accomplish this?

Doctor Jack pokes out his head, and looks aloft. He sees no signs of danger about. It is quite possible that all the men are employed in getting up anchor and attending to the numerous duties which sailing involves.

Under these circumstances it would seem that they stand a show at least. Jack, the athlete that he is, twists his body through the window, and standing with his feet on the sill is able to look upon the deck.

As far as he can see everything is favorable to the success of their enterprise. He bends down to speak to those within.

"Kirke, see if you can get hold of a line and pull a boat in. Then drop into it, and hold up against the stern."

The Texan comprehends just what is expected of him, and without wasting time reaches out a long arm. Unable to accomplish what he sets out to do from that point, he swings his body entirely outside, and with his foot reaches one of the painters.

Then the boat is dragged up, while Doctor Jack keeps watch above. Kirke drops into it after securing a clutch upon the vessel.

"Ready, Jack," he says.

There is plenty of noise or commotion on board the yacht, which is fortunate, as it helps to drown any they may make.

All is ready for the next move, and Jack has decided before now, in his mind, what it will be. Avis does not hesitate to meet him half-way, for she knows what he means to do.

"Shall I try to make the transfer, Jack?" is what she asks.

"Yes, dear. Larry, help her all you can, as I am unable to leave my position. Even now I fear they suspect our move," returns the doctor, stooping for the moment.

He can feel a movement below, and knows Avis is passing through the cabin window with the rare tact she usually displays. He has no fear about her reaching the boat in safety, for Kirke is below and Larry above—both of them can be depended on in the emergency.

What engages Jack's immediate attention is an-

other fact. Some of the sailors are at work at the windlass, dragging the anchor out of the mud, while still others set the sails. Even at this moment the mud-hook must have been dragged out of its bed, for the yacht begins to move gently through the water. The wind only comes in flaws, and at present it is nearly calm.

Given a few minutes more, and the plans of the Americans must succeed; but it begins to look stormy. Some one comes toward the stern. Jack sees the tall figure, and knows this to be the owner of the yacht.

Whether Lord Rackett suspects the truth, or is only coming aft to make a general survey of things in that quarter, it does not matter—the result will be the same—discovery.

It cannot be avoided, so Jack presumes he might as well take the reins in his own hands, and start the fun. He waits a little, as every second counts now. Once Avis is in the boat, Larry can swing over, and only Jack will remain. When he passes the Rubicon, the quick slash of a knife will free them from the yacht.

The breeze begins to puff up a little, more the pity, and no doubt Kirke will have need of all his powers to hold the row-boat steady.

One glance Jack gives back of him, and this shows that progress is being made—Avis is just in the act of passing into the boat—in a few seconds she will be safe.

Small though this space of time may appear, great events can be crowded into it. History repeats itself in proving this fact.

Lord Rackett advances. His step even quickens, as though suspicions fly into his brain. He has

come about far enough Doctor Jack thinks, as he elevates his arm.

The next moment the Englishman utters an exclamation of sudden astonishment as he makes a discovery. Then comes a flash of fire almost at his feet, accompanied by the quick detonation of a Yankee revolver. The lead actually burns his lordship's ear as it speeds by. Just as Doctor Jack has intended it should when he took that sudden aim.

Thinking he has been hit, and at least come very close to death, the Englishman whirls on his heel and dashes forward, at the same time shrieking at the top of his voice:

"This way! They escape by the stern! Bring the yacht to! Send her off on the wind! We'll swamp the boat! We'll drown them all!"

Fortunately the man who now clutches the wheel and holds fast to it, keeps his senses, or these contradictory orders might have resulted in disaster on board.

Another glance Doctor Jack shoots over his shoulder as he clings there, standing like a rock between the one he loves and danger. This shows him how far matters have progressed.

Avis is safe in the boat. She makes her way back to the stern, even while he looks. Larry has succeeded in dropping over the back of the Texan, and just saves himself from going overboard, as they are beginning to cut through the water with some speed.

This shows Doctor Jack that the time has come for him to act. He can see several men rushing toward the stern in response to the shouts of Lord Rackett, and his first thought is to keep them back.

It would be difficult to explain what ideas flash

through his mind in that second of time. Perhaps he even conceives that they might fire upon the receding boat. Men in a rage will do many things that their better judgment warns them against.

To prevent this is his first thought. He even has the means in his hand, and will not hesitate to employ it.

Without attempting to take aim, he begins to discharge the remaining chambers of his revolver. One, two, three, four, five shots in rapid order like the pulsations of a heart quickened by excitement, for the weapon is of a new model, the hammer being thrown into position ere the discharge is made.

Such a fusillade coming from one quarter is enough to demoralize the stoutest heart, and even these stout British sailors dread to rush forward in the teeth of what seems to be a storm of fire and lead.

Each man believes his comrades are being mowed down on either side of him, and that his turn will come next. Hence, the feeling of intense alarm that sweeps over them. As if seized with a common impulse they throw themselves upon the deck. Vain are the shouts of the valiant Lord Rackett, who hides behind a mast and urges them on. It would take more than ten pounds to make most men rush on certain death.

Jack laughs as he sees how well he has accomplished his purpose. The time is ripe now to finish his work.

Not another second should be lost. Kirke Smith still maintains his clutch, but it is telling upon him terribly.

The breeze freshens, and the yacht, with a por-

tion of her sails set, dashes through the water like a thing of life, dragging both boats behind.

Of course, there is danger of swamping. The foam rushes along the sides, and even splashes over at times. Avis sits there, silent yet resolute. Her eyes are bent upon the figure clinging to the stern of the yacht, so that she has little thought for the peril of her own position.

That figure now makes a move as if his work in the quarter above might be done, and Avis holds her breath when she sees her husband stoop down.

It is no small feat he has before him—everything combines to make it difficult—dangerous. Doctor Jack fortunately possesses a quick eye, steady nerves, and a sure hand. He is eminently qualified to grapple with conditions that would dismay most men.

When he thus bends down he finds the brave Texan under him. Words pass between, for it is essential a plan of action should be laid.

A mistake just now might cause a terrible disaster, and bring ruin upon what gives promise of being a grand success.

Jack has received a quick, affirmative answer to the question he put, and this settles the question so far as he is concerned.

He throws himself upon Kirke, who is flattened out in the bow. The weight forces a groan from the Texan, but he maintains his death-like grasp upon the rope, until the cheery voice of Doctor Jack assures him that the latter is safe in the boat.

Then by degrees he lets the rope out until they are being towed by a straight line. Towed at a remarkably swift pace, the churning, foam-flecked

water dashing over their bow, while it momentarily threatens to engulf them.

It has come to a point now when all that is required is the keen edge of a knife laid across the painter, to divorce them from the flying yacht. Doctor Jack takes the place of the Texan; he has a knife in his hand, and the glimmering light from the cabin window shows that it is open, ready for the business ahead.

He watches his chance, for it is necessary that they should cut loose at the proper time when mounting a wave. The sailor men on deck have recovered their wits. They are even now advancing to the rail, as the steersman calls out the situation of affairs. Lord Rackett, too, looms up against the background of white sail.

What care Doctor Jack and his friends. They have accomplished the main part of their labors, and but one stroke now remains to be given.

The knife lies on the cable. Jack's eye keeps on the watch for his chance. It comes, and the muscular arm that can send a blow out from the shoulder like that of a steam sledge-hammer presses the steel downward.

There is an electric shock, a whip-like snap as the stout painter parts, a shout from the deck of the flying yacht, and then the boat rolls there in a sea of foam. Already the Texan has hold of the oars, and they fall just in time to steady the craft, perhaps to prevent a capsize.

Like a Flying Dutchman the yacht vanishes from view. All that can be seen is the light from the cabin window, looking like an eye of fire over the waves, and growing rapidly more distant and indistinct.

CHAPTER XXI.

OVERBOARD.

The Panama sails early in the morning, with our little party of four aboard. It looks as though they have left all dangers behind at Valparaiso, and their future seems as fair as the glad October morning that greets them as they steam past the United States cruiser Baltimore and the Chilian men-of-war in the harbor, heading for the open sea.

There are many passengers on board, a number of refugees having been received from the Baltimore just previous to sailing, to be landed in Peru. All that the Chilian authorities particularly care about is that Balmaceda and his great treasure do not leave the country. True, strange reports of the late President's death have come from the snow-capped Andes, across which he is said to have fled toward Bolivia, but it is hard to convince these people that the Dictator, likened unto Louis Napoleon in their history, is dead.

Our friends have little desire to mingle with the crowd, and keep pretty much to themselves. During the first day Doctor Jack makes a discovery that gives him some uneasiness.

He has enemies on board the steamer. Men who seek to regain that which he has carried away from Chili, and who are members of the secret society of the nitrate mines. He recognizes them, sees the ugly looks they give him, and knows that all danger has not been left behind at Chili.

These men are sworn to follow him, to outwit the

American, and either wrest his possession from him, or have his life—a pleasant prospect, indeed, for Doctor Jack.

Doctor Jack is treated to another surprise at noon, and it comes from his wife. They have lingered at the dinner-table, being both good sailors, while a number of passengers are already in the grasp of the wretched *mal de mer*.

Jack leaves his wife chatting with a Spanish lady, the wife of one of Balmaceda's former ministers, while he goes on deck for a smoke.

In ten minutes she rejoins him, and, to his surprise, he notes an anxious, troubled look upon her fair face.

"Why, Avis, dear, you do not feel well?" he asks, quickly and tenderly.

"It is sickness of the mind, then, not the body, Jack, for you know the motion of the grand old ocean never affects me."

"Something troubles you, Avis—tell me what it is—nothing serious, I hope?"

She smiles now.

"You may laugh at me, Jack, but I have a presentiment of dark days ahead. Of course, my sex gives me the privilege of such a feeling. You men say it comes from a fit of the blues. Never mind. All I know is that the presence of that fascinating creature on board the Panama troubles me."

Doctor Jack starts and looks grave.

"Avis, you don't mean the Senorita Marilla."

She nods her head, and looks solemn.

"It may be only a coincidence that causes her to be on board this steamer. A great many people find it healthy to leave Chili just now, and she may have been on the losing side."

But Avis cannot be convinced; she sees some dark design in the presence of this Chilian beauty who would take her Jack from the one who loves him with all her life.

"How comes it you discovered her presence when no one else has seen her?" he asks, presently.

"By mere accident. I knew there was a lady in state-room 23, for the minister's wife told me so. Chancing to be passing when the stewardess was opening the door, to carry in some toast and a cup of tea, my eyes fell upon a face I shall ever remember as the most beautiful as well as the most dangerous I have ever seen. Marilla de los Vegas it was. I believe her presence on board this steamer is no accident, but part of a deep laid plan."

Doctor Jack is secretly worried himself, but for the sake of his wife he assumes to make light of the whole affair. Thus the afternoon passes and night comes. The steamer plows her way through phosphorescent seas, every drop seeming like molten silver as it falls upon the black surface.

Doctor Jack and his wife promenade the deck until a late hour, when Avis goes to her state-room feeling drowsy. Her husband wishes to smoke another cigar ere turning in, and seeking a retired spot indulges in deep thought.

A step behind causes him to turn his head.

"Jack!" says a voice.

"I'm here, Kirke," recognizing the dark figure.

"Thought I saw you come this way. I want a few minutes chat with you."

"Good! What better place than this could you find. Sit down, my dear fellow. Have a weed?"

"Thanks. I'm done smoking for to-night. Doctor, I have made a discovery."

Jack turns and eyes him in the peculiar light from the Southern Cross and such heavenly bodies as chance to beam upon them.

"Indeed! What is it like?"

"There are passengers on board not strangers to you, I reckon."

"So—you have seen her, too," remarks Jack, with a laugh, for he does not fear the beautiful Chilian half as much as does Avis.

"Her? I don't catch on quite."

"Don't you mean our handsome Chilian tigress—the woman who sees something in Jack Evans that strikes her fancy as to what manner of man she admires—in a word, *Senorita Marilla*?"

"You don't mean she's aboard?"

"Why not? This steamer is free to all who can pay for accommodations. Avis has seen her."

"Well, I can easily believe it since the rest of the gang are here."

"Now, it's my turn to ask your meaning."

"Easily answered. We have as fellow-passengers Lord Rackett Plympton——"

"Confusion!"

"And Colonel Leon Garcia, the fire-eater of the victorious Chilian Army."

Doctor Jack smokes in silence for a minute, but his thoughts are busy.

"This looks bad. I thought we'd give them all the slip; but, by Jove! our enemies go with us. It may make a difference in my plans."

"Dangerous crossing Panama with such a gang at your heels, ready to do anything in order to accomplish their end."

"Still I must reach New York in time. A vast interest demands my presence there at a certain day."

I shall, perhaps, have to keep on board the steamer until California is reached, and then cross the Continent by rail," musingly.

"Not a bad idea—much preferable to crossing at Panama. I believe at Aspinwall you would be murdered without fail."

"Ah! you know considerable about the canal. I believe you had some connection there."

"Yes. I'm something of a civil engineer, and worked a year on the ditch. Of all the hard places on earth, command me to the towns at either end of the isthmus. With such forces working against you, Doctor Jack, and the elements their gold can buy up on the isthmus, it would be suicide for you to try the passage."

"Tell me. When and how did you discover that these men were on board?"

"A short time ago—two figures passed me as I leaned over the rail—it was dark, and they probably failed to notice me. I thought a voice I heard sounded familiar, and listened, when I soon learned the truth."

"Could you tell what they talked about?"

"Not enough to decide, but it had some reference to you."

These things combined cause Doctor Jack to believe the fates have trouble in store for an individual about his size. He can grapple with difficulties as well as the next man, and does not lose that admirable self-possession that has long been his heritage.

Kirke, the Texan rover, who has led a wild life in many climes, is really more concerned over the matter than Jack.

"We must keep our eyes open, comrade. These rascally pirates mean us harm," he says.

"Come, Kirke, I never knew you to worry or flinch before."

"I'm thinking of your wife, Jack," quietly.

The doctor bites his lip.

"You may be sure she is on my mind, old friend. There are three of us. Surely we should be able to protect her; and we will, mark me," with the ring of steel in his low spoken words.

"Turn around. You can just get a glimpse of the two men up yonder, outlined against the heavens."

"I see them, and recognize milord's flowing side whiskers. At once Larry's envy and detestation," returns Jack, in a whisper.

The figures above vanish presently, but leave a peculiar influence behind, which Kirke in his odd fashion likens to the odor of sulphur. At any rate, their presence on board the steamer is suggestive of evil.

Jack grows quite uneasy, and soon tosses his cigar overboard as though it has lost its flavor.

"Good-night, Kirke. See you later."

Truth to tell, he fears lest something might happen to Avis with these elements around.

Another day dawns and all is well. Doctor Jack looks in vain for the two men. They prefer to avoid him at present, though sooner or later he is bound to come upon them.

It is evident that the Englishman has abandoned his yacht at Valparaiso in order to follow the man he hates and the woman he adores. This alone stamps his motives as full of venom.

The worst may be expected from a man who could thus make sacrifices in order to accomplish his end.

So the day passes. A pleasant day, too, which is enjoyed by the travelers.

Again it is night.

Men who plot evil love darkness, and when the night has settled down it may be expected that those who hide from the light of day, and the eye of Jack Evans, will be on deck again, to talk and plan, perhaps to work.

Jack has talked it all over with his brave wife, and Avis knows the danger that menaces them. She is on her guard, and armed. Lord Rackett may find he has come in contact with fire should he seek to give her trouble.

The night threatens storm. * Black clouds drift at intervals across the heavens, and the wind has arisen, so that the waves begin to roll.

There is something fascinating to Doctor Jack about the dark masses that rush hissing and seething along the side of the steamer. He has never grown weary of watching their passage, and leaning over the rail.

While thus engaged in meditation, he hears the sound of footsteps behind him. Of course it is Kirke, who left his side a little while before and promised to return when he had investigated certain things.

So he does not turn his head, and nothing warns him of the danger hovering near.

The first that Doctor Jack knows of his peril is when some weapon comes down upon his head with crushing force. At this very instant it seems to him he hears a woman's scream above the whistle of the wind through the rigging. Then rude hands seize him by the legs, he is given a toss, whirls through the air, and after one unsuccessful clutch at the rail, falls into the surging billows as they come foaming and hissing from along the vessel's side, eager to clutch their prey.

CHAPTER XXII.

THAT JADE—FORTUNE.

Doctor Jack does not cry out. Indeed, such a thing is beyond him, for the blow, delivered with considerable power by the arm of hate, together with the salt water that rushes into his mouth when he dips into the sea, are enough to prevent it.

He at once rises to the surface, striking out manfully to keep afloat. Though unable to shout, he casts his eyes upward and sees two forms bending over the rail—that of a man and a woman. In the former he recognizes the English athlete—the woman is not Avis—then she must be the Chilian beauty.

Something splashes beside Doctor Jack. He puts out his hand instinctively, and it falls upon a life preserver. Without doubt the senorita has tossed this over. If she could not save the man she loves, arriving on the scene just too late, she can at least do this much for him, and Doctor Jack will in the future feel less disposed to despise the Chilian girl.

Even when his hand grasps the cork buoy the steamer rushes from him as though eager to desert the American. He ejects the water from his throat and cries out, but his voice sounds so very feeble with the wind and waves battling against him that it could never be heard fifty feet away.

Then even the lights of the steamer are lost to his vision, as a wave rolls between, and Doctor Jack Evans is face to face with about as deadly a peril as ever beset his pathway.

He slips the life preserver on, and, as his shoes seem heavy, his next act is to remove them, securing them to the cork float.

The danger is great, and death seems very near the intrepid traveler. Does he flinch? He has everything to make life pleasant—money, health, and a loving wife. The thought of Avis forces a groan from his lips, but, taken in all, he meets the terrible danger with calmness. It may be the offspring of utter despair, that grim setting of teeth and quieting of nerves that marks the soldier's rush to death.

Eagerly he looks beyond every time he rises on a wave, indulging in a vague hope that his absence may have been discovered, the steamer stopped, and boats lowered.

This hope gradually forsakes him as time passes without his discovering any light. Then follows despair, for Doctor Jack is human, and this danger is one so entirely different from anything he ever experienced before.

The storm fortunately is not severe, else would he have perished. Now and then billows break over him, but, as a general thing, he rides their crests.

Thus the dreary night drags on, the minutes seeming hours to the wave-tossed Yankee. He longs for dawn to come, not that he has much hope of seeing a vessel, for crafts are not plentiful on the Pacific in these parts; but the darkness renders his position doubly irksome.

At last the streaks of dawn appear, and by degrees the gloom passes away. Doctor Jack still finds himself buffeted about by the waves, which, however, have not increased in violence, although the sky is clouded over.

His eyes scan the surface of the sea on all sides,

but nothing meets his view. Even a glimpse of land is denied him.

The day begins, and its hours pass like lead to the drifting American. He knows the folly of trying to swim, and saves his strength.

At about three o'clock as near as he can judge, he makes a discovery. Some object is floating near him. He can see it with every wave, and at once begins to push in that direction. When he discovers the nature of the floating object that a wonderful Providence has sent within his reach, Jack finds new hope. He begins to believe that after all he may be saved, and that his time has not yet come.

It is a boat.

Washed from some vessel's deck, or drifting from some harbor, it comes to his hand as though a strange destiny brought it. His hand clutches the side, and with a tremendous effort Doctor Jack drags himself into the boat.

What a glorious feeling it is to have stanch planks between one's feet and the heaving sea. He lies there for some time resting. The sun peeps out and begins to dry his clothes. This stirs him to life again. He sits up and examines the craft which Heaven has sent to his assistance.

There is an oar under the thwarts and a small mast and sail lashed to them. A jug attracts his eye. Joy, it is full of fresh water. He quenches his thirst, and feels a thousand per cent. better. In a locker at the stern he discovers a rude basket, opening which he finds some food, enough for several scanty meals. Truly, he must be favored of Heaven. Those who fight against him will need the powers of Satan to gain a victory.

When night closes in again, he has his sail set and heads to the north-east. Such a course will bring him nearer land at least. He dozes through the night, sound sleep being out of the question.

Another day opens with a squall that almost sends him to the bottom. Doctor Jack's stout heart becomes cold with sudden alarm, but his steady hand guides the little boat, and he saves her.

Later on he makes a remarkable discovery. In the basket he finds a small kerchief, and on it a name he worships—Avis.

Eagerly he presses it to his lips as he realizes that her hand has had much to do with the opportune coming of this life-boat. He remembers now, seeing such a craft on board the steamer, it having been picked up adrift.

There could be but one chance in a million that man and boat would come together, yet the faith of a woman has sent the craft to his rescue.

How he breathes her dear name in an ecstasy of devotion. Did ever man have so sensible a wife before? Will a kind fortune bring them together again?

He feels cheered and invigorated by the discovery just made. It gives him new life to keep up the good fight.

Thus another day passes, and night finds him sailing on in the old course, headed north-east, with a gentle wind wafting him on.

Again he dozes, for the day has been warm, and Jack's rest has been terribly broken of late. From one of these cat-naps he is aroused by some sound, and sits up suddenly.

Surely that must be the whirl of a steamer's screw, that churning sound he hears. Doctor Jack

twists his head to the right as far as it will go, and gives a groan because he discovers nothing.

Then he turns on the left, looks eagerly, and receives an electric thrill.

The Pacific is almost absolutely still, save for a long glassy swell, and not a sound proceeds from its untroubled bosom. Perhaps half a mile away Jack sees lights. They are reflected from the water; they move steadily on, while that churning sound continues.

"It is a steamer!" he ejaculates almost feverishly.

Perhaps he imagines it may be the Panama, which has perchance been cruising around the spot at which he was lost, and is now pursuing her regular course, bound north.

At any rate, it is a steamer which passes by and threatens to leave him.

How can he draw attention from those aboard; fortunately Jack has considered this question before, since it was just as possible that he might meet a vessel in the night as during the day.

An old newspaper covered the basket, and this he has twisted until it promises to make a fair flambeau or torch, when a match is lighted and applied.

About his head he waves this flaming torch, forming all sorts of extraordinary hieroglyphics in the air. At the same time he raises his usually stentorian voice and shouts. Alone it would never succeed, but the spark of fire as seen at a distance draws attention. He keeps it up until the paper is exhausted, while his voice grows husky with shouting.

Then he discovers to his extreme joy that the steamer no longer shoves through the water. She

has come to a stand, and loud orders float over the water to Jack's ear.

Ah! the boats are being lowered. Soon they will pick the lost traveler up. How his heart is thrilled at the prospect of a meeting with his dear wife; for as yet he does not suspect that the steamer can be any other than the Panama.

Gruff voices call, he answers as best he can, and lights dance over the water heading toward him. Then a boat looms up, and Jack shakes hands with the officer in the stern sheets.

This party is an utter stranger, and here he receives his first hint that the steamer arriving so opportunely may be another vessel than the Panama.

He has undergone much, but it is the mind that is wearied more than the body.

In five minutes he reaches the steamer, and clambers aboard where the captain meets him kindly.

"Come to my cabin, sir," he says, when his first officer has assured him there is no one else in the small boat.

Once there it remains for Jack to make a discovery that pleases him.

"Can this be Captain Washburn?" he exclaims.

"That is my name, sir, but you have the better of me. And yet, duse take it, where have I seen you? Bless my soul, can it be possible this is my friend, Doctor Jack Evans?"

"Right you are, captain. I've come to you over troubled seas. How under the sun do I find you here, and what vessel is this?"

"The tramp steamer Itasca, in which I have bought an interest, bound for California with a mixed cargo. Now, tell me your story, man."

"It is a long one, captain."

"Then let us wait until you are in the humor. Take a glass of this to put life in you. The steward will soon put a meal before you."

So Doctor Jack finds himself in good hands and well looked after. With invigorating food his strength returns, and the captain soon hears all he has to tell.

Jack is, of course, anxious to overtake the Panama, but the chances seem against them, as the other steamer has several days the start. If they reach a port, he may at least learn some news, and this buoys his spirits up.

So they steam on, heading for Quito, where the tramp steamer expects to do some business. She flies the British flag, of course, and will go completely around the world ere reaching her starting point, Liverpool, again.

One evening they sight land, and pushing on enter the harbor of Quito at dawn. Doctor Jack rushes on deck eagerly, glances about him at the town and the hills, and then gives a shout, for there not fifty yards away is anchored the Panama, with men working at some broken part of her propeller.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AFTER THE STRANGE PACKET.

Upon sighting the steamer that carries his wife, Doctor Jack experiences a revolution of feeling, such as perhaps comes upon a man but once in a life-time. All his doubts and fears vanish, and he is filled with joy and enthusiasm beyond measure.

As speedily as possible he secures a boat and is taken ashore, transferred to another craft manned by some natives, and in a short time finds himself alongside the Panama.

A dangling rope is all he needs, and up he goes like a monkey. Once more he treads the familiar deck. His heart is almost in his mouth, as he starts in the direction of the cabin.

The first person he meets, as luck will have it, is milord, who at sight of him appears tremendously astonished.

"Bless my soul, can it be you, Doctor Jack, or your ghost?" he says, and the American, believing as he does that Lord Rackett is the cause of his recent experience, cannot but admire his self-possession and assurance, for it must be a tremendous shock to him.

"You can see for yourself, milord," he says, coldly.

"Doctor Jack, I'm dused glad to see you turn up. We are enemies in one sense, man, but hang me if I want to see even the fellow I hate worst on earth treated like that. The rascal clipped you on the head, and had you overboard before one could say Jack Robinson."

The American realizes now that milord desires it to be known that he had no hand in the villainous game, yet, remembering the clutch upon his ankles, and how readily he was tossed over the rail, Jack is far from convinced.

"You saw me go over, milord?" he asks, curtly.

"Ay, and rushed to the side to see you struggling there. It happened that another also saw the rascally deed—the Senorita Marilla. Woman's wit is quickest. By Jove! while I gaped she had the good sense to toss a life preserver overboard. Then we lost sight of you."

"Ah, indeed! My dear Plympton, why didn't you seek the captain, and have the steamer brought to? A boat lowered might have found me."

The Englishman smiles, and strokes his luxuriant whiskers.

"I was so filled with horror, by Jove! that for a minute I could not move. Then I hunted for the captain. Inquire of him and you will learn that I appeared before him out of breath, and announced the sad news. The steamer was stopped, boats lowered, and hours spent in searching, but it was of no avail, and every one believed you were lost."

Very plausible this, but subsequent investigation shows Jack that about an hour elapsed between the time of his accident and the exact minute the Englishman appeared in such a disturbed state before the captain.

It is very difficult to find the commander on board a steamer, you know.

During this hour the vessel must have passed over about fifteen miles, so that the chances of their discovering Jack upon the heaving sea were about one in ten thousand.

The American pushes past, for he has no desire to continue the conversation, since his heart beats like a trip-hammer at the thought of reunion with Avis.

Hardly has he left milord than Jack runs across some one who falls upon him with vehemence, who wrings his hand like he might a pump-handle, laughing and crying the while as if hysterical.

Of course, it is Larry, and the little fellow shows his extreme pleasure in every word and look.

A few sentences from Jack gives him an idea of what happened, and then it is the doctor's turn to ask questions. He learns nothing new, but hears how Avis has suffered during the days that have elapsed since his disappearance. The full particulars he will know later. As he suspected it was by her orders the boat was sent adrift to find him if Heaven was kind, and guided by the strange fate that has ever watched over his fortunes, it came to the man who would have perished but for its aid.

Avis with her own hands packed the basket just as Jack suspected, and her tears wet the little kerchief she dropped into it, while praying that Heaven might guide it to him.

This was done while the steamer lay to, some fifteen miles away from Jack.

Leaving Larry, the doctor makes his way to his state-room, eager to embrace his own. Reaching it he pauses to listen. Avis is an early riser. She has already been in the cabin, so the steward tells him.

A few seconds he listens to her moving about within, and unable to longer control his eager hand he knocks. There is a peculiar significance in his manner of doing this which Avis must recognize.

Hardly have his knuckles repeated the knock

than he hears a slight scream within. Then a figure comes flying to the door with all the swiftness of love. The frame of wood that separates them is dashed open. A pair of gray eyes distended with thrilling hope, a white face marked by eager anticipation, followed by a pair of plump arms that fasten around his neck tightly—this is the welcome that greets the returned voyager.

“Oh, Jack!”

That is all she can say. Words do not count for much at a time like this, but her heart is attuned with happiness and thanksgiving for the wonderful blessing Heaven has seen fit to bestow upon her.

Doctor Jack notes that several curious people gather in the cabin. He is pleased with their hearty congratulations, but desires to avoid their gaze at present. So he draws his now weeping wife—her tears are for joy—into the state-room where, with his strong tender arms around her, they can talk in peace.

Much is said. Jack learns all that has passed since his mishap. He is more than positive that the English athlete it was whose hands took hold of his ankles, and with such an easy toss sent him overboard, whoever may have struck the stunning blow he received.

It is thought best, however, not to mention the fact promiscuously, as he cannot prove the accusation, and it will do no good.

Later on they go out on deck. To every one Doctor Jack tells the same story, that he was struck on the head and thrown overboard by some unknown party. This agrees with the story the Englishman has told when he sought the captain of the steamer one hour after Doctor Jack's mishap.

Much speculation is indulged in, but no one guesses the truth.

Only for the accident to the Panama's screw, which necessitated a delay of several days at the Peruvian port, Jack might not have overtaken his wife for weeks. There is a sad lack of telegraphic facilities in these South and Central American countries that causes travelers infinite trouble.

The northern voyage continues, and as the days pass on they draw nearer to the California coast. Doctor Jack, warned by the attempt on his life, become more cautious. He only ventures on deck at night in company. There are a number of men on board who seek his downfall, and it pays him to be careful.

He has heard an interesting story from Avis, which proclaims the fact that there are those near who have sworn to secure the package Kirke Smith brought in, and which Jack seems to value so highly.

On the very next evening after his disappearance, while Avis, almost distracted by the various emotions that naturally took possession of her, was on deck talking with Larry, some one entered her state-room and tumbled things about in a search.

Fortunately she had given the package to Kirke Smith to take care of, so the search was in vain. On another occasion Larry caught a Chilian trying the door of his room. The man upon being questioned declared he was sitting reading in the cabin when he heard a distinct cry for help coming from that state-room, as he believed, and thinking some one might be in trouble had endeavored to open the door. Of course, Larry knew this was a story hatched up for the occasion, but the fellow told it

with such a plausible air he forgave him, though marking the man for future observation.

Doctor Jack now begins to count the days and figure on the time which must elapse before he reaches New York. Indeed, as his plans mature, he even loses some of his old coolness, and shows a little feverish anxiety that astonishes those who have been accustomed to seeing him so calm even under extraordinary occasions.

He and Kirke have many consultations—always in the latter's state-room. They take turns remaining below, and are never on deck at the same time. They have something to guard there, something that represents Doctor Jack's fortune, and which grows more valuable to him with each passing hour.

Thus he endeavors to find out what day they are apt to land at San Francisco, how long it will take to make the trip across the country to New York, and various other points that indicate his desire to reach the city on Manhattan Island at an early date.

He even wanders down to the engine-rooms and converses with the chief officer in charge, makes calculations with him, and while not bribing him, receives assurances that the steamer will do her best from that hour on.

Perhaps he believes Jack has a large bet on the result. Such things often occur on board transatlantic steamers, for the passengers are a heterogeneous crowd, and many among them cannot exist without some sort of excitement.

Larry amuses himself as best he can. There are a goodly number of passengers, but they consist, for the most part, of refugees.

Perhaps the fact that such a constant surveillance

is kept up prevents their enemies from making further attempts upon the strange package. A steamship is limited in its quarters, and discipline is maintained on board with such severity that men with evil intentions hesitate about carrying out their desires. Escape is next to impossible. No express train can be boarded which will carry them beyond danger—around them the wide ocean—on board a captain who is at once judge and jury, king for the time being over the little realm he rules.

So these restless spirits keep quiet. They, too, make plans and organize a great conspiracy against the man whom the sea gave up. Whenever occasion offers they spy upon him as he saunters the deck with Larry or his wife, greedily picking up a few words here and a few there that may serve as straws to show which way the wind blows. Doctor Jack has a mighty torrent to cross before he finishes his journey and reaches New York in safety with the packet Kirke Smith brought in.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MAN FOR EMERGENCIES.

“Land in sight!”

This glad cry is passed around the steamer one morning about ten o'clock, and as usual produces some excitement. Glasses are brought into use, and all sorts of guesses made, both concerning the nature of the land so dimly seen on their starboard bow, almost ahead, and the time that must elapse ere they reach their destination.

Doctor Jack, wise man that he is, goes directly to headquarters and is speedily in possession of all the facts known to his friend, the captain. They will, barring accidents, and tides being favorable, drop anchor off the city of San Francisco some time that evening.

During the afternoon all the travelers get their belongings in shape for a move. After the long voyage every one appears happy at the prospect of stepping on *terra firma* again.

Doctor Jack's brow is clouded at times, for the steamer was thrown from her course by a storm safely weathered three days back, and considerable time was lost in regaining it, so that when he figures on reaching New York in person by noon on the fourth day of November, he has a Herculean task before him. What is unfortunate he can find out nothing of the train time-table on board, and this, in a measure, accounts for his eagerness to land, in order to make investigations.

The day wears away, and gradually the land

opens up, so that without a glass they can see its beauties. San Francisco lies there like a gem set in a ring, her stately buildings flashing in the light of the setting sun that gilds their many windows until the scene looks like one of enchantment.

Then dusk creeps on, and the good vessel makes a spurt as though anxious to reach the goal ahead, where a thousand electric lights mark the site of the wealthy city.

Doctor Jack and his wife are on deck, ready to go ashore just as soon as possible, when the health officer permits. Jack chafes at the thought of this delay, and growls at the regulations which the health and customs officials make use of to build a hedge around all incoming travelers.

Doctor Jack has under his coat, and fastened securely to his body, the flat package which Kirke Smith delivered to him in Valparaiso, but it is far from his intention to smuggle jewelry or any other valuables into the States, yet that which he carries is worth a fortune—to him.

Nearer still the steamer advances, slowly creeping past the rocks, under the guidance of the pilot who knows every foot of water in these parts. The lights no longer dazzle them, as a whole, but each individual one stands out on its own merits.

To the impatient souls on board it seems as though their progress is snail-like, but at last the anchor goes down. They are immediately boarded by several officials, and for this Doctor Jack is at least thankful.

A few formalities are gone through with, when a dozen passengers descend to the tug, which will take them with their effects ashore.

Jack glances at his watch, and notes the time

with an uneasy feeling, as though he apprehends trouble.

Great traveler that he is he has not been in San Francisco before, and must depend upon others for a knowledge of facts. Hence, when a man pushes forward and offers the use of his hack, Jack points to a couple of leather portmanteaus, their only baggage, and opens the door of the vehicle for Avis to enter.

In two minutes all is ready. The driver comes to the door for his orders, which Jack gives, he is positive, in plain language.

Just as the fellow turns away, he finds his arm grasped and hears a low, fierce voice say:

"Would you like to earn fifty dollars, man?"

Well, for half that sum a San Francisco hackman would peril his soul, to say nothing about his body, and Jehu replies instantly:

"You bet!"

He sees at his side, endeavoring to keep in the shadow, so that those in the vehicle may not discover him, a tall, distinguished gentleman, undoubtedly an Englishman.

This worthy immediately puts some bills in his hand, bills that amount to the sum specified.

"What am I to do?" demands the driver, probably in doubt as to whether he must run away with his load, or dump them somewhere so they may be robbed. Which job he hardly likes, as the appearance of Doctor Jack and the Texan indicate men of resolution, bold fighters, and parties not to be betrayed with impunity.

"Take them to the wrong station. They want to go East. Manage it so they miss the train, and the money is yours. Can you do it, man?"

Jehu gives a gurgling laugh, and says:

"You bet! Dead sure!"

"I'll be on hand to see how you come out," with which the Englishman dodges into the crowd just as Larry pokes his head out of the hack window, squeaking in his high voice.

"Say, fellah, why don't you make haste? By Jove! now, it would be too bad you know, if we missed our twain—by Jove!"

"Missed it," roars Jack, aroused, "well, there'd be the dickens to pay."

Whereupon they start, and the driver feels a little uneasy over his position. True, he has the fifty dollars stowed away in a pocket, and that would be balm for many a hauling over the coals, but somehow he fears that these tourists are inclined to be desperate people.

They have come in on a British vessel, but he recognizes fellow-Americans. The Texan gives him an uneasy feeling, while Doctor Jack awes him.

It happens, however, that Jehu is a reckless sort of man, and he believes he can earn his money and escape before they discover the mistake. At any rate, it can be called an error on his part.

They move along.

No one can complain of the slow rate of speed, for Jehu drives his horses like a man who intends reaching his goal. Our friends feel that they will get there in plenty of time, and all seem easy in their minds—all save Larry.

That worthy appears to have a spirit of unrest. He bobs his head out of the window a dozen times, scans the lamp-posts as they pass, and in various ways manifests something more than curiosity.

At length they pull up, the driver drops the two

leather portmanteaus from above and is presently at the door. His game is to receive his pay, mount his vehicle, and dash away before his victims discover how he has left them stranded at the wrong station.

This is a very nice idea, but Doctor Jack immediately knocks it on the head.

"Remain in the vehicle, friends, while I run and see about the train. If we are left we may have to go to the Palace Hotel."

The driver grits his teeth at having his plans foiled, but dares say nothing. He would give a good deal to be able to crawl out of sight just then, dreading Jack's return.

Doctor Jack is gone just three minutes, and then he appears in view, rushing toward them with furious strides, his face dark, his manner alarming, at least in the eyes of the guilty Jehu, who trembles in his boots.

Straight up to him Jack steps and demands, in a low but terrible voice, what he means by taking them to the wrong depot.

The fellow plays his part fairly well, but it takes the quick eye of Doctor Jack to read between the lines.

"You are telling me what is false. I demand the truth. Were you hired to bring us here? Admit it, and I will not harm you. Persist in your denial, and you must take the consequences."

Something about his manner assures the driver that there is but one course for him to pursue. Doctor Jack has a way about him of convincing men with whom he has dealings that it will be to their interest to obey his will.

So the fellow falters out a half-way confession,

endeavoring to screen himself, as well as he can, at the expense of truth.

Jack brings him to a halt in the midst of his effort. He has no time to spare.

"Take hold here—up with it—now the other. Off for the Union Pacific station, man."

He makes no threats, but his voice and manner are both terrible, and the driver fears he has gotten himself into a serious mess. An idea strikes him that may save his neck.

Using the whip vigorously, he sends his team and vehicle across the city to the main station about as speedily as a hack has ever been known to travel in San Francisco. Hills are surmounted on the jump. Jehu seems determined to remedy his mistake, if such it could be called. Secretly, he knows full well, the sly rascal, that it is already too late.

The manner in which they are dragged through the streets of the Golden City prevents any conversation inside the coach.

At any moment the vehicle is apt to give a lurch that may send them forward. Jack has thrown that strong left arm of his around Avis, while he braces himself to meet any crisis. Unless there comes an upset, all will be well.

This rocking, dragging, reckless movement is kept up for some little time, when suddenly the vehicle draws up near the curb. Jack looks out, and sees by the many lights that they have arrived at their destination.

He feels for the handle of the door, but after finding it is baffled a little. Still the driver does not put in an appearance to help him. At last Jack succeeds, and leaps out.

The secret of the driver's failure to come to his

assistance is explained. Jehu is not on the box, nor can he be seen. Evidently the man's fears have gotten the better of his valor. As soon as he brought his vehicle to a stop, he dropped down and deserted it.

This does not bother Jack. He is more vitally concerned regarding a train just now.

So he whips the two small leather trunks from the boot of the vehicle with as much ease as though they were hand-bags.

By this time Larry is on the pavement, with Kirke beside him, and Avis appears.

As Doctor Jack shoulders a portmanteau, Larry makes for the other, but finds the Texan ahead.

"Look out for Doctor Jack's wife. I'll take care of this," says Kirke, quietly.

Leaving the deserted hack they bustle into the station, smiling at the odd appearance which they undoubtedly present, but business allows little regard for looks, and Doctor Jack snaps his fingers at such things as this.

Straight to where they see some official in the uniform of the railroad company they proceed, and there Jack drops his burden.

"Are we too late for the eastern train?" he asks.

"Unfortunately, yes. It left fifteen minutes ago," is the discouraging reply, but Doctor Jack has prepared himself for this emergency.

"It is of the utmost importance that I should overtake that train, sir."

"It is our fast express, sir, a flyer."

"Never mind. I will engage a special."

"An expensive business, my dear sir."

"Hang expense, man. Direct me as to what I shall do."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RACE ACROSS THE CONTINENT.

The official takes another look at Doctor Jack and makes up his mind this man is fully able to stand the racket. Besides, he discovers something familiar about the other.

"I have met you before, my dear sir."

"Very likely. I have traveled much."

The official is eying him steadily.

"Were you in Spain two years ago?"

"Yes."

"Ah! I am proud to meet you, Doctor Jack. I won a wager on your success at that bull fight," holding out his hand.

"So did I," remarks the doctor, with a glance in the direction of his wife.

"And any favor I can do, Doctor Jack, I will be only too glad of the opportunity."

"Then see about the special as quickly as you can, sir. I have a tremendous amount of interest in overtaking that train."

"You will be on board, Doctor Jack, long before it crosses the Rockies, I give you my word; but it may cost you half a thousand dollars."

"A mere bagatelle, sir. If I fail to reach New York by noon on November the fourth, it will probably cost me a million dollars."

The official purses up his lips as if to whistle, but emits no sound.

"A pretty close shave even if you are on time. If

it were any one else than Doctor Jack I'd say it couldn't be done."

"I mean to do my best, and, as a general thing I have managed to succeed in the past. This special, sir——"

"I have telegraphed already for the man you must see, and here he comes. An hour won't make much difference. You will have only an engine and sleeper. The dispatcher will make out your schedule and give it to the conductor. Thus you will know just at what point you can overtake the eastern flyer."

This is very soothing to Doctor Jack, who begins to see the wrinkles being smoothed out of the rough road in front. He is soon deeply engaged in conversation with the gentleman who comes up. Every one seems to take a decided interest in him when they hear who he is. Sometimes it pays to be famous.

The arrangements are speedily made, and our little party feel their spirits rise as they contemplate a solution of the problem that has so recently overshadowed them.

What does an hour count, when with a special they can rush over the rails like lightning. It is astonishing what money can be made to do in this world—at any rate, it lubricates the wheels and makes traveling a pleasure.

Doctor Jack consults his watch as they arise from the lunch which has engaged their attention in the restaurant, more to pass the time away than because they were hungry.

"The hour is up," he remarks.

"Your train is ready, Doctor Jack," says the official to whom he has been turned over.

"Good!"

The small amount of luggage is put aboard, and presently they enter the Pullman sleeper which is to be their quarters until the regular train is overhauled.

It is not an unusual thing for a special to be sent flying over the rails, and, according to the rules of the road, everything gives way to such a wizard traveler.

The start is made.

Once they clear the yards their speed increases, and presently they rattle along in a way that causes Kirke Smith some anxiety, for the Texan, quite at home on the wildest horse one could find, is not much of a railroad traveler, and holds his breath when he finds himself being whirled over some level stretch, or down a slight declivity at the speed of a mile a minute.

And this is only a beginning.

When the locomotive gets warmed to the work, more astonishing figures will be shown.

As for Larry, this pleases him immensely. He lolls in a chair in the smoking compartment, and uses up numerous packages of cigarettes—a luxury he has been deprived of for some time, owing to the haste of their departure from Valparaiso. The others now understand the meaning of Larry's wonderful smile, so child-like and bland, when he came in with bulging pockets, while they were at lunch. He had bought out the entire cigarette stock of the dealer in the station, resolved not to be left in the grand hustle across the Continent.

Jack has secured pillows from the porter of the car, and has a lower berth made up for Avis, who, feeling tired, will lie down for a time,

As for himself, he enters into conversation with the conductor, a bright, agreeable fellow, and picks up a number of facts connected with the route across the plains, some of which may prove valuable to him.

"I wonder if, with this open window, I could indulge in a cigar. Join me?" he says.

"With pleasure, sir. You can do what you please, since you own the car for the time being. Of course, we have a smoking compartment——"

"Larry monopolizes that," laughs Jack, lighting up.

"What! that little man?"

"With a fearful weed."

"Ah! I comprehend. You do not take to the cigarette, then?"

"I abominate them; but Larry is privileged. He's a great fellow. Let me tell you some of the things I've known him to do."

These are numerous enough to cause the conductor to feel the utmost interest in the peculiar little dude, though finding it hard to understand how a hero can appear such an oddity.

Their speed is terrific.

At times they seem to actually shoot through space, such is the manner in which a fearless engineer can whirl a special on its way.

Doctor Jack is deeply interested in the progress made, and makes a copy of the schedule which the conductor carries, of course subject to changes. A red light at a station may bring them to a halt, when a message brought aboard will govern their future movements.

They slow up in passing a station, the conductor looks out, guesses the identity of the place, con-

sults his paper and announces that they are "on time."

So the night ride goes on.

What Jack fears most of all is some accident that may delay them. He knows the men with whom he deals, and would put no deviltry past them. If they learn in some way, as is certainly possible, that a special follows them, they can readily jump at conclusions and understand who pays the bill.

Jack believes a man would be dropped at some station with instructions to blow up the track, or in any way delay the special for some hours, even if compelled to ditch it.

This he earnestly trusts will not take place. A train going seventy miles an hour takes chances enough under ordinary circumstances, without the attention of train wreckers.

These thoughts would keep Jack from sleeping, even did he care to. He remains awake and speculates as to what he can do in case certain possibilities become realities.

At just five minutes of one, as he is replacing his watch, a sudden shrill whistle sounds, and it is easy to feel the action of the air brakes. The train comes to a stand. They are just about a quarter of a mile from a village, where, as the conductor informed him, regular trains were accustomed to draw up, and receive telegraphic messages while the engine tank was renewed with water.

Jack puts his head out of the window. The first thing he sees is a red lantern on the track just ahead of the locomotive.

Here is aggravation, vexation, delay.

He swings himself off the car, with Larry at his heels, to see what it means. Avis has appeared,

and looks from a window, anxious because she enters into Jack's plans with all her heart as a loving and faithful wife should.

When Doctor Jack reaches the spot where the red lantern is seen he finds there the engineer and conductor of his "special."

"What's wrong?"

The conductor is swearing, while the engineer keeps looking around as though he fully expects to see a band of daring road-agents appear in view.

A rail has been removed—it lays near by across the track. Only for the red light those on the special would have been wrecked in a terrible manner.

"Very considerate of the rascals," says the conductor, puzzled and angry.

"I can account for it. All they wanted was to delay us," and Jack tells his idea.

"By Jove! what is to hinder us replacing the wail. Then it's only a little time wasted?" and Larry tugs away at the long steel rail in a manner that, if quite ineffectual, shows his desire to accomplish something.

His words electrify them. The porter, fireman, and Kirke Smith are called, and in a few minutes the rail is in position.

Every spike has been thrown away, but there is a claw for drawing more on the engine and a hammer for driving them home.

Lanterns are not needed, since the brilliant headlight of the engine gives them all the illumination they could wish for. One picks out a spike here and there. The engineer sends them home with heavy lows.

"All ready!" is announced.

Thirteen minutes lost!

What would have perhaps paralyzed traffic for a time on many an European railroad, has been only an incident of thirteen minutes duration on this American trans-continental line.

They hasten once more to board the special, and "forward" is the cry.

Avis has a story to tell now, and when Doctor Jack hears it, he experiences mingled emotions, anger for his bitter enemies, and admiration toward his brave wife. It also makes clear the design of the parties who removed the rail.

While the men were all at work in front of the locomotive, Avis, looking out of the window, heard a noise toward the rear of the car, and glancing in that direction, was just in time to see a man's legs passing in at one of the windows which Larry had left open.

Quick to comprehend the situation, and not deigning to call for help, Doctor Jack's wife had opened her satchel and secured the revolver given to her long ago by the man who had also taught her how to use it.

Then leaving her seat, she glided to the rear portion of the car.

Looking into the smoking compartment, which Larry had pre-empted as his own private "den," Avis is just in time to discover a dark-faced man examining into the sacred mysteries of the dude's valise, while a comrade, half-way through the window, seems ready to receive whatever spoils may be discovered.

Avis Evans has no difficulty in making up her mind that these men are engaged in something that does not concern them. She does not stop to specu-

late upon the facts—it is enough to understand that they mean robbery.

A movement which she makes attracts the attention of the man in the window, who, uttering a sharp exclamation, drops out of sight. His companion, attracted by the cry, glances upward, and suddenly remembers an engagement he has in another quarter, of such importance that he hardly knows whether he goes through the window head or feet first.

Doctor Jack's brave wife having thus disposed of the rascals, busies herself in closing every window of the car, which task she has hardly completed when her husband and his friends enter again; at the same time their progress is resumed.

Jack is able to put two and two together, and the result is one that satisfies him.

"At least we leave a couple of our enemies behind," he reflects, though forced to confess his ignorance regarding the number of foes ahead.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON BOARD THE "SPECIAL."

Once more their speed is as swift as the wind that whistles down from the defiles of the mountains.

The time lost will soon be made up, for the express train ahead cannot begin to annihilate space as they do, so there is a constant gaining on their part.

It is possible to figure out a victory again, unless their enemies hatch up some new form of deviltry to baffle them, which Jack looks out for. He believes the red lantern of warning was only placed on the track to alarm those on board the special simply because Doctor Jack's wife was present. Only for this fact the special would have plunged into death—for to strike a broken rail when going at the rate of a mile a minute, means even more than death—annihilation.

Avis sleeps no more.

She is too thoroughly interested in the events going on around her, for what concerns Jack interests her. She listens and even offers suggestions at times, which more than once appear to be timely, and are readily seized upon by Jack.

All of them note the passage of time now, and figure on results. When the special is halted once at a station for new orders, Jack takes advantage of the short delay to ask questions, learning that the Rocky Mountain Overland Flyer express passed this point just twenty-five minutes before, being an hour and ten minutes late.

This is cause for congratulation, since they have reduced the lead thus far more than half, and it begins to look as though before a great while their end will be attained.

The night wears on.

Several times something occurs to delay them, but Doctor Jack shows no signs of despair. He feels that his clutch is a long and sure one—victory must come.

When morning arrives it finds them in a wild part of the mountains. They have left the green valleys behind. On either side frown the walls of great canons through which defiles the train dashes.

So close are they upon the heels of the regular now that the engineer is compelled to keep a sharp lookout lest he run by accident into the express.

When the flyer stops at the next station they will be close behind, and possibly able to transfer.

Jack exults in their speed.

"Would that we could keep this up until New York is reached. There would be no question, then, of not being on time," he laughs, as the car swings like a pendulum while tearing around sudden curves, until even Avis utters a low cry, fearful that it is going over, which, of course, is not the case.

Then a long whistle announces that they are drawing near the station. The conductor has drawn their attention to smoke hovering above in the canon, which he says was left by the locomotive drawing the regular train.

Heads are thrust from the car windows as they issue from the mountains—the station is half a mile beyond, with a good many cars around it. A freight has stopped upon a siding to let the regular passenger pass—but their eyes are seeking something else.

"She's there!" exclaims Larry, and all of them can see a line of passenger coaches beside the station.

"Confusion, no; the engine heads this way," cries Kirke Smith.

"You're wrong, comrade. That is the locomotive of the freight just peeping out beyond the last Pullman," puts in Doctor Jack, whose sight is better than that of either companion.

Avis seconds him, and all feel like cheering as they run down the line and overtake the Overland Flyer, which has remained at the station five minutes under orders to await the arrival of the special.

There are some passengers on board who note the coming of this latter with anything but pleasure. Indeed, the deepest chagrin would be more apt to describe their feelings, since they have endeavored by every dishonorable means possible to keep Doctor Jack from traveling east on the only train that can possibly take him to New York by November fourth. Some people, indeed nearly all persons would have given up in despair when these difficulties arose like insurmountable barriers before them; but we have seen how one man succeeded in riding over the worst and wins his Waterloo here at the station.

The special comes to a stop, and a transfer is soon made. This time they do not have a car to themselves, but there is plenty of room. Doctor Jack will not be crowded, and, if necessary, he would have engaged the sleeper which the special engine drew to take them on to Ogden and even Denver.

Once more, forward.

He knows he is now on board the same train as his foes. Milord and Colonel Garcia are in the Pull-

man with them. The latter looks out of the window when our party passes, but the unabashed Englishman, with a spy-glass in his left optic, eyes them questioningly, much to Larry's unbounded admiration, for he is able to pick up an idea or so here.

Jack has time to think matters over. He believes his enemies, who have combined against him, will not give up the ship as long as he is west of New York.

They have too much at stake to give up until the last prop is knocked away. The Chilians are banded by their league to fight for the possession of the packet, or at the least to keep Doctor Jack out of New York until the day which he has set upon reaching the metropolis has passed. Lord Rackett is urged on by his passions, and the vow he made to wed the widow of the American athlete.

Even bitter enemies can travel in luxurious Pullman cars, and not come in contact. The battle may be one of looks and sneers.

Toward the land of the rising sun this trans-continental train speeds. Doctor Jack has a head on his shoulders that is worth something. When they take on a new locomotive, he is on deck and has a little chat with the driver. Perhaps a gold piece changes hands. At any rate, they all fancy the man of nerve, and the long train whirls from station to station on time.

"You must be a wizard, Doctor Jack," remarks the Pullman conductor, laughing. "It is many a day since I have gone through here with such a snap and vim. We start each time as though we meant business, but something throws us out of gear. Now, it is like a well-oiled piece of machinery."

"Why do you lay it to me?" smiling.

"Ah! I have eyes, sir. The fact of your hiring a special told us you particularly desired to get East on this train. Sometimes golden oil lubricates machinery remarkably well."

Night comes.

Jack has kept an eye on those whom he has reason to watch, while his companions also remain on guard. Avis carries the packet now, in her small satchel, which is fastened by a strap over her shoulder. Who gets it must first kidnap Doctor Jack's wife.

More than once he has seen three men in consultation, and knows full well that they mean mischief.

To delay him they would even wreck the express train, if it could be done without great danger to themselves. He has warned the conductor, so that in all probability sharp eyes will be upon the plotters, and they may be frustrated; but such desperate men halt at nothing when determined to carry a point.

Of course, Jack must sleep, but he has arranged with his companions for a system of watches, each one to remain on the lookout several hours.

It is past midnight when Jack feels a hand touch him. He is only dozing, for the section has not been made up, though the curtains are drawn.

Putting out his head, he sees Larry. The lamps are turned low in the car. Sounds of heavy breathing indicate that a number of persons at least are asleep.

The train is at a stand.

"What is it, Larry?" asks the doctor, quietly.

"They're up to some mischief, I'm afraid. Three of them went outside," comes the reply.

Jack is immediately on the alert, and passes to the door, touching the sleeping Texan as he goes, and making a movement with his finger that Kirke readily understands.

Larry follows Jack, while the Texan remains to watch Avis, to guard her if need be against lurking danger, and he will do it if any man can.

As soon as the doctor steps from the car, he glances around to see where they are. The night is dark, but several lights burn at the station.

A red lantern has halted the train, and upon making inquiries it is learned that some sort of accident has happened ahead that may delay them a while.

Doctor Jack begins to think fortune has leagued itself with his enemies, for he cannot believe this accident has been caused through any plans of theirs. He walks up and down the platform, counting the minutes, sometimes passing from the light into the shadow.

Larry is seated on the step of the sleeper watching his friend. The impatient engine throbs, and occasionally steam escapes with a savage hiss. Precious minutes are being lost, which must be made up again.

Larry is anxious, too, though he fairly succeeds in disguising the fact by an apparently cool demeanor as he smokes his cigarette.

Suddenly he becomes aware of a certain fact that gives him a spasm of alarm. Doctor Jack has walked into the shadow, and, although three times twenty seconds—the usual length of his turn in the darkened spot—have passed, he does not appear in view.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"IT'S OUR TURN NOW."

Larry has seen nothing suspicious, nor has he heard any hostile sound. The hissing of steam from the iron monster at the head of the train would prevent this latter, and prove a splendid cover under which a desperate deed might be carried out.

At the same time, owing to the peculiar circumstances of the case, Larry fears that something has happened; that the thread which holds the sword of Damocles suspended over the head of Doctor Jack has been severed.

He leaves his seat, and with a hand on a weapon steps into the shadow. The glance he casts around him fails to bring any reward, since Jack is not in sight.

Larry's alarm increases. Now he draws his revolver, and hurries to the end of the platform. Once he fancies he hears voices, and starts in that direction, but it turns out to be a couple of trainmen conversing.

A man is under the cars with a light and a hammer, testing the wheels, for with these fast trains it is necessary to take every possible precaution in order to prevent accidents.

Larry's coolness vanishes. He even drops his beloved cigarette, such is his anxiety to discover what has become of his friend. While he thus prances about, not daring to wander far from the train, as it may move at any minute the signal comes that

the track is clear, he catches sight of a moving figure.

This is enough. In the darkness he cannot tell whether it be friend or foe, but, rushing up, he thrusts his weapon against the man's side, while saying fiercely:

"Surrender!"

"Why, Larry, old fellow, is it you?" comes a voice.

"Jack—thank Heaven! But you gave me a scare, man. What made you stwoll away?"

Jack seems to be engaged in coiling up a rope, and Larry, when he discovers this, is doubly amazed.

"They tried it, Larry—and failed. Just as I stepped into the shadow a noose fell over my shoulders. I happened to have one hand up to my hat, so that was free to draw a knife while I jumped forward in order to prevent being thrown. The fellows at the other end ran also. I got my knife out, opened the blade with my teeth, and cut the noose; but I caught hold of the rope, planted my feet against a rock, and we had a tug of war for a minute here in the darkness.

"Finding I was too much for them, and was dragging the rope in, they gave up and scampered, leaving me this trophy, which I hardly know what to do with."

"Take it aboard. Who knows how useful it may yet prove. Besides, it may tell us something about the fellows at the other end."

"Larry, correct. Was that whistle meant for a forward movement?"

They run to the platform close at hand. The train moves, sure enough. After all, the delay was not so long, and can be made up.

When they get into the car neither the Chilian colonel nor his British ally can be seen.

"Egad!" says Larry, slapping his knee, "what a widiculous joke it would be if we turned the tables on them, and they are left behind."

Jack smiles.

"That would be too good a thing, my dear boy."

He sees Avis looking out from behind the curtains, and motioning with her hand. Jack fancies she seems pale. He springs to her side.

"What is it, dear?" he asks, tenderly.

"Jack, while I slept a hand entered the half-open window and snatched the small satchel. I caught the strap, but the catch broke and the hand-bag is—gone."

Jack smothers a groan, and Avis continues quickly:

"But, dear Jack, some good angel must have put it into my head that they coveted that alligator bag, for when the curtains were first put up I transferred the packet——"

"Oh! Avis!"

"To my bosom, where it lies now, safe and sound."

He throws his arms around her.

"Bless you for a thoughtful little woman. They stand a poor show against both of us, with Larry and Kirke thrown in."

"It was also fortunate that I had my jewelry on. In fact, the contents of the bag, I believe, netted them some five dollars."

"They're welcome to it. Why, the rope must be worth part of that," laughing.

"What rope, Jack?"

"They tried to hang me, my dear," and he relates

his little adventure, while Avis clings to him, trembling and breathless.

"When will this end, husband?" she asks, for her nerves have been placed under a severe test during these few weeks.

"Given four and a half more days and we will arrive in New York. Once there my hour of triumph comes, and these allied forces will no longer have cause to desire my downfall."

"Oh, Jack, I wish we were there!" she sighs.

"For your sake I echo the wish, little woman," fondly replies the man of steel.

"I am so afraid something will happen to you."

"Ah, Avis, look back, my dear! You have seen me in many situations of danger. Was I ever out-generated? A cool head and a steady hand have carried me successfully thus far, and with the help of Heaven they will not desert me now."

Cheered by these brave words, Avis regains much of her old-time confidence. This stout heart has so often won victories, it is no wonder she believes her Jack well-nigh invincible.

Larry comes up at this moment, with a disconsolate look upon his face.

"It's no use," he says, sadly, shaking his head as he speaks.

"What's wrong now, Larry?" asks Jack.

"They swung on at the last moment—in the smoking-room, now."

"Sorry to hear it, but it's what we expected. So far we've been a good match for all their forces. Let us hope it will keep on."

The balance of the night passes without more trouble, and our friends greet the new-born day with thankfulness.

Each hour takes them nearer their goal, and the enemy must continue to grow more desperate as time passes.

It occurs to Jack that perhaps he can turn the tables on these plotters. By leaving them behind, he will at least be free from their miserable plotting, and have a fair chance to show up in New York on time.

In Larry he has an enthusiastic ally when the idea is broached. Indeed, the little man can see no reason why they should not count on it as already settled.

"I believe in fair play. So far they've had all the fun. By Jove! it's our turn now. Let me ponder over the matter, too. Perhaps I can hatch up a plan."

The mighty intellect of the dude sets to work, and, of course, Jack takes a back seat after that. Kirke is passing away the time by wandering along the entire length of the train, where, of course, he finds many types of human nature. His object is to discover, if possible, how many of the Chilians are on board, men who have come so many thousands of miles to outwit Doctor Jack.

Avis is watching her cousin, and she suddenly gives Jack a nudge.

"I think Larry has discovered something," is what she says, and, glancing at the dude, Jack finds him with a broad smile upon his face, a veritable grin.

"Ah! he's looking at himself in the glass between the windows. These fellows of his stamp are conceited enough. No doubt he believes he has a killing expression on his face."

"That's too bad, Jack, for he's looking out of the

window. Larry has a great mind for schemes, though, perhaps, you wouldn't think it to look at him. I know he has just hit upon some elegant idea. There, I told you so. He's coming over to give us the benefit of it.

"As true as I live, it's so. If I faint during the recital, dear Avis, remember—the cordial."

"You cruel man—but I know you have in secret a high opinion of Larry's abilities, though you may pretend to laugh now and then."

The arrival of the object under consideration at their seat prevents any further conversation. Larry it is, puffing out his cheeks with tremendous importance.

"I've got an idea, my dear boy. Wait until you hear it—then congratulate me."

"With pleasure," returns the other.

Larry glances around him. He does not care to share his bright thoughts with those who may be enemies, and they are known to have a number of this class on board the limited train.

The coast seems clear, yet Larry assumes a voice equal to a dramatic stage whisper in imparting his momentous secret.

"I believe I can dwop the wascals behind, and give them a chance to hire a special," he announces, at which Avis gently claps her hands, and Jack says: "Bravo, dear boy."

Larry tries to swell out with more importance, but it is impossible, since he has already reached the point of danger.

"Now, listen to me, my friends, while I explain my idea. Of course, it must hold until night comes. Jack will get the exact time we stop at some station. Timing himself, he will leave the car. These

men can be depended on to follow. Jack must lead them a little chase, give them the slip, and run back to the twain as fast as he can. The second he puts his foot on the step, the conductor will start ahead."

"Ah! how d'ye know he will?"

"Because you must have an arrangement with him beforehand, dear boy. That little part of my plan I have left to your ingenuity."

"I'll wrestle with it, and endeavor to do my duty," says Jack, in mock humility.

"That's one scheme."

"What! you have others, Larry?"

"Jove, dear boy, hosts of them. They bristle like quills on the back of the fretful porcupine. Here's an idea that might come in later. We could arrange for a special to be ready at Denver, where we lose half an hour. It would take us to St. Louis in time to catch a twain in advance of the one regularly made."

Jack opens his eyes at this.

"Bless me, a splendid thought. If it comes to the worst I'll have a talk with the conductor about it. What else, my dear fellow?"

Larry has only started. He begins to describe certain unique plans for accomplishing the desired result, some of them so very original, that Doctor Jack is fairly staggered.

"Hold on, I beg of you! Don't bewilder me. Talk about your Cardinal Richelieu. He couldn't hold a candle to Larry Kennedy," and he really means what he says this time.

"Then you will accept and twy one of these plans?" asks the proud inventor, twisting his diminutive whiskers with the air of a conqueror,

"All of them, Larry, in time, if necessary. But first we will endeavor to leave our friends, the enemy, to-night, with the aid of the conductor. There he comes, now. I'll talk with him a while."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"CHASING A RAINBOW."

The conductor is, of course, inclined to be non-committal. He has heard much of Doctor Jack's story, and is deeply interested, ready to do all in his power to assist him, and yet at the same time fully aware that his duty will not allow him to swing trains at the whim of a passenger. All Jack desires, at present, is the assurance that there will be no holding the train a minute or two in order to allow belated ones a chance to get aboard.

Here the iron rules of the road, which the conductor could not break for him, work in his favor.

"When the time is up we start, if there are a dozen Englishmen wandering about," he says, firmly, and Jack builds upon this.

He also speaks about the special at Denver, and has the official figure to see whether it would count him anything at St. Louis.

Thus the day passes.

With the coming of night, Doctor Jack prepares to carry out his little plan whereby he will possibly shake off his worst foes for a while.

They draw near the town where a short stop will be made. Jack knows just how long. Even now the engine gives a long signal whistle to warn the people of their coming.

"Be very careful," pleads Avis, looking a little anxious, as her husband shows some eagerness to be off.

"Don't be alarmed, dear. I shall keep just ahead of them, and lead them a wild-goose chase. Even if they should try to overhaul me, they are only two, and I am well armed, you know."

She looks proudly at him. Memory carries her back to many a scene where her Jack proved himself a man in every particular. She has seen him master a black bull in the *plaza de los toros*, at Madrid, when no matador dared enter the ring—has watched him beat back a mob of rascals who waylaid the train by which they passed over the Pyrenees, and been near-by when he saved her brother from the vengeance of a Turkish pasha, meeting the Russian wolf-hounds in the garden of the palace and wresting victory from what promised to be defeat.

All these and many other similar scenes flash before her mental vision. No wonder she has the utmost confidence in this man who twists difficulties that are seemingly insurmountable to his will.

He waits after the train stops, just two minutes, timing himself so as to hit it just right. Lord Rackett and Garcia have alighted to stretch their legs. Larry reports that they are watching through the window, as though they do not mean to take their eyes off the little party.

Doctor Jack arises. He gravely kisses his wife good-by, shakes hands with his two friends, walks to the end of the car, and steps off.

Lord Rackett and Garcia have apparently already taken the alarm, for they are not in sight. Jack strides away. His manner is that of one who travels no more at present.

"What success?" asks Avis, eagerly, as Larry comes back to her side.

"The best, I believe. At any rate, I saw two dark forms gliding after him."

Doctor Jack's wife cannot help from showing anxiety, no matter what unlimited confidence she puts in him.

"What time is it, Larry?"

He consults his chronometer.

"Seven and a half after nine."

"And we leave here?"

"At exactly nine-ten."

There remain two and a half minutes. Hours could not ordinarily seem longer to this devoted wife. There are times when we measure the passage of seconds by heart beats—when even a minute may seem an eternity.

Larry walks up and down, trying to smother his own impatience, while Kirke Smith is on the platform keeping an eye about.

At length Larry walks to the end of the car. The time is about up. A few more seconds and the train must start if the conductor is as prompt as he has promised to be.

A hand touches Larry's shoulder, and, turning, he sees Avis, who has been unable to remain in the car, when so much is at stake.

"Surely the time must be up," she says.

"Just."

Even as Larry utters the word, there is a whistle from the engine, a jerk of the cars—they move.

Doctor Jack's wife holds her breath.

If he has made a mistake of three seconds, Jack will not only leave his enemies behind, but be caught in the same trap.

The train moves slowly at first, being a long one, but the momentum increases.

"There he comes!" exclaims Larry.

A figure appears in view at the farther end of the station platform; a figure that delays not a second, but rushes across the lighted space after the train with a speed equal to a young cyclone; a figure that the eyes of the loving wife instantly recognize as Jack.

Will he reach the last car? The train moves faster each second, but Doctor Jack has not yet put forth his best efforts, though rapidly annihilating the space that separates them.

Now he makes a spurt—encouraged by the presence of Avis, whom he sees. Five feet only separate him from the platform, but the train is going at a lively rate.

Another burst of speed; two feet remain. He puts out his hand; a fall now must mean ruin to his hopes; but Jack is light on his feet.

Kirke Smith stands on the steps. He holds on to the rail, bends forward and reaches out his horny hand, which Doctor Jack instantly seizes upon.

Another second and the daring runner has swung himself upon the back platform of the last car. He has won.

Avis throws her arms about her husband.

"Oh, Jack!" she says, with a long breath. "I began to fear you would lose the race. It was a terrible moment of suspense," at which the doctor, though exceedingly short of breath just at the time, is compelled to laugh, as the ludicrous side of the matter appears before him.

"How did you succeed? Were you followed?" asks the Texan, eagerly.

"Two shadowy figures kept after me up to the time when I gave them the slip, and made a bolt for

the train. They could not have gotten aboard—simply impossible—I ran as fast as I could, and had a narrow escape, as you have all seen."

"By Jove! look yondah!" exclaims Larry, at this juncture, and all turn their eyes backward over the road bed.

They are now quite a distance from the station. Nearly an eighth of a mile, and making good time that momentarily grows faster.

The track chances to be straight, so that they can readily see the well-lighted platform and all its immediate surroundings.

Even as they look in response to Larry's call, two figures come dashing upon the boards. They are men who thus run, men who have beyond a doubt been left by the train; men who even run up the track some distance, as rattled travelers left behind are apt to do, in the vain hope of overhauling the train that has given them the slip.

Of course, the distance is too great for our friends to make them out, but they are almost positive as to the identity of the men who have been dropped so neatly.

Larry in particular is greatly tickled over the discomfiture of the enemy. He takes off his hat, and makes a bow in the direction of the stragglers.

"Farewell—farewell—the best of friends must part!" he says, dramatically, and, of course, the two figures, now growing shadowy in the dim distance, answer not a word.

Doctor Jack regains his breath after a little while. They are speeding along over the open prairie now, the town having been left behind, and as the night air is decidedly chilly, it is deemed proper that they seek for warmth and comfort inside the car.

Jack has already told in a few sentences how he managed to outwit the two men who followed him so closely. It is not his habit to boast, and those who hear what he has to say must draw upon their own imaginations to fill in the story.

Larry walks forward to indulge in a smoke, for the car has been turned around during the day, and the little compartment is no longer at the rear.

A few minutes later they see him hastening toward them. His expression is really ludicrous. At the same time they can see that the dude has received a shock.

He sinks into a seat opposite Doctor Jack and his wife, who have just arranged with the steward for a little supper, and have a table spread between them.

"What is the matter, man? You look as if you had seen a ghost," says Jack.

"By Jove! two of them, dear boy," gasps Larry, rolling his eyes.

The doctor and Avis exchange glances.

"Now, what in the duse can he mean? Come, Larry, out with it. What have you seen?" the former remarks.

"Tell me, can a man be in two places at the same time?" demands the dude.

"Well, hardly. I've known people to try it, but the attempt generally ended in failure. Why do you ask that? Is it possible——"

Larry jerks his thumb over his shoulder.

"I found 'em snugly deposited in the smoking-room," he says, laconically.

"Them? Do you mean the Britisher and his Chilian ally?"

Larry nods, unable to say a word.

Doctor Jack looks at his wife again, and laughs. He takes it very coolly, indeed; one would think it might be a great joke with him.

"How can it be possible, when we saw those men lose the train?" Avis asks.

"Ah! my dear, not one of us could declare their identity at that distance. As to the two men who followed me, I only saw them in the dark. It is evident that instead of entering the chase themselves, these worthies, suspecting a trick perhaps, stuck by the train and sent the two Chilians who have come under their orders after me."

"Then it was all useless?"

"Not so. We have reduced the number of our foes by two. That is something to feel good over. I believe Lord Rackett and Garcia are all we have to watch now, and by my next *coup d'etat* I hope to get rid of them."

"You have resolved, then——" begins Larry, but his drawl is so labored that Jack, as is often the case, finishes the sentence for him.

"To have a special awaiting our arrival in Denver, on which we shall outstrip the regular train and leave our foes behind."

"Three cheers for Doctor Jack!" but the other's frown causes Larry to restrain his enthusiasm.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

Presently the Englishman is seen to look through the car. Larry declares that he seems greatly surprised when his eyes fall upon Doctor Jack, but he returns again to the seclusion of the smoking apartment, where doubtless various schemes are being brought forward between the colonel and himself, having for their object the detention of the American, perhaps even his death.

Having talked the matter over with the others as they pass the time over the little table, Jack proceeds to make out a message which he desires to send ahead, and which will give him a tight squeeze on the game.

Then he waits for the conductor, with whom he has a long talk in the seclusion of the state-room. Sworn to secrecy concerning the facts, this official folds the message up with some bank bills Jack hands over, and then the affair is as good as arranged.

Jack can lie on his oars.

All that is necessary is to watch the enemy and circumvent any move looking to a sly attack from the rear.

When Denver is reached by this trans-continental train, there will be a surprise in store for some people, no doubt.

The schemes of the two allies may embrace a variety of forms, since one wants the secret packet

that seems of such immense value to Doctor Jack, while the other covets his wife.

By this time, however, the bull-dog nature of the British nobleman has been fully aroused. He hates Jack with intense fervor. Every victory of the American stirs up the sluggish bad blood in his veins, until he is now in a condition bordering on frenzy, though outwardly cool, and could see the man against whom his anger is kindled burned at the stake with pleasure.

When two such unscrupulous plotters strain their energies in the endeavor to hatch up mischief, the chances are they will arouse something of a commotion.

An hour later the sleeper drops off from the train which goes on and leaves it on the open prairie. Luckily the accident is discovered by the conductor a few minutes later. He happens to look out of a window and sees lights a mile or so in the rear, where no illumination could be expected, pokes his head out still farther, counts the cars, and finds his train one short of the number with which it started.

So he pulls the cord, stops the train, and they back down the track to secure the lost sleeper. Already those on board have become aware of the situation, and crowd the platform. An investigation shows that it has been no accident. Some strong hand uncoupled the cars after detaching the bell-rope and accomplishing other things that are necessary on account of the vestibule.

No one makes any accusation. True, Colonel Garcia was in the smoking compartment, but he was the first to give the alarm, and declares he saw a rough man, whom he took to be a trainman,

doing something outside the door, but paid little heed to the matter until the sleeper slowed up, when, looking along the track, he discovered they were left.

Lord Rackett ventures the august opinion that this is the work of train robbers, who intended going through the sleeper when the remainder of the east-bound train had passed from sight.

Some of the passengers grasp this story eagerly. Strange how people want to be connected with some notoriety, especially when it does not cost anything and involves no danger.

Doctor Jack and Larry exchange a glance, and even the dude's smile is suggestive. Evidently they know just about how that car chanced to be left behind. The rough man was all in the mind of the indignant Garcia.

Again they move forward.

One of the colonel's first acts is to wash his hands, which fact Larry reports with considerable emphasis.

The conductor is suspicious, and during the remainder of the night keeps a close watch upon the sleeper "Diana." It will not redound to his credit to leave a car filled with first-class passengers standing on the main track.

It is a game of diamond cut diamond now, and as yet Jack seems to be holding his own, yes, and gaining ground continually.

Another dawn and all well. So the day and night pass and Ogden is left far behind.

The train is on time. That golden lubricator appears to be doing its duty remarkably well. There is nothing like it to surmount difficulties when it comes to railroad travel.

"When do we reach Denver?" asks Larry, who begins to weary of this chase against time.

"In a few hours," returns the doctor, handing over the time-table, for they have left Cheyenne.

They are whirled on their way. The great Rockies have been climbed, beyond which lie the prairie lands of the corn-growing States.

Their enemies seem very quiet, but it is at such times the most danger is to be looked for. Perhaps they have engaged in a little surprise of their own, which may be sprung upon the party of Doctor Jack at the moment when least expected.

Denver opens before them.

"Get in readiness, Avis, but show no more excitement than if we meant to stop here for a meal like the rest of the passengers," and Jack snaps his valise shut.

"How about our trunks?" she asks, woman like, thinking how terrible it might be to land in New York without her wardrobe.

"They will follow—only a few hours later. We don't dare take the risk of transferring them to the special. My dear girl, you surely know money will provide——."

She puts a hand over his lips, which he immediately kisses.

"Say no more, Jack. I can get on if I never see my trunk again. You know best, dear."

"Denver—half an hour for dinner," cries the brakeman, passing through the car.

The train rolls into the depot, and stops. Around them is the wizard city of Colorado, where in a decade magnificent blocks of business houses and lovely palaces for merchant princes have sprung into existence.

They do not mean to lose any time, but having gathered what few packages they carry, are ready to leave the sleeper as soon as it comes to a stop.

Larry leers at milord, who, standing in the aisle, looks after them with a peculiar expression on his face, and then makes a motion with his arm to Colonel Garcia.

No doubt he is very much surprised at seeing them with their luggage—at least Larry takes this view of it—for a very brief space of time.

They pass out.

The conductor awaits their coming, for he desires to see them win, and at once says:

“Follow me, Doctor Jack. I will show you where your special lies.”

“Gentlemen, I am sorry to detain you, but truth to tell I have a document here that requires your presence at police headquarters,” says a tall man, opening his coat and showing a detective’s badge, while two blue-coated officers push into view.

Larry’s jaw drops, Doctor Jack frowns, at once recognizing a bold move of the enemy.

“Perhaps you have made a mistake,” he says, knowing full well, however, that this is not so.

“You are Doctor Jack Evans, of New York?”

“Yes.”

“And these gentlemen, Lawrence Kennedy and Kirke Smith—the latter I knew of old in Texas?”

“Quite right. Let us see your warrant.”

All of them glance over the document, but Avis notices milord and the Chilian colonel hurry away, though she thinks little of it at the time, believing they are heading for the restaurant connected with the central station.

“There’s no disputing the fact that you have au-

thority to take all of us or only one member of the party to headquarters," says Jack, into whose mind a thought has flashed, by means of which he may bridge the difficulty.

"Well?" drawls the officer, waiting.

"We are in a great hurry. I have hired a special to take us to St. Louis ahead of the regular train. It means much to me to reach New York at a certain hour. There are men on board this train who strain ever nerve to halt us—an English lord and a Chilian colonel. I was in the affair at Valparaiso when the sailors of the Baltimore were mobbed, and these men have followed me all the way. You understand the situation, I am sure. Now," and his hand meets that of the officer on the sly, transferring a little roll of greenbacks, "so far as I can see, your document really only calls for the presence of one of our number at headquarters to explain this charge."

"Now that you mention it, Doctor Jack, I believe you are right," returns the officer, as he glances again at the warrant. This time looking through different glasses.

Jack gives Kirke a meaning look. Kirke, who has stood there eager to knock the whole trio of officers over, if need be, so anxious does he feel to be of assistance.

"I will remain," he says, quickly.

"That settles it, then. Follow on the next train," and each, in turn, shake hands with him.

"The law is satisfied. Come, Kirke," remarks the astute detective, locking his arm with that of his old friend. "Good-by, Doctor Jack—I've heard of you before—and good luck follow you."

Jack waits no longer. Already five minutes have

been wasted by this episode, and that is a considerable period of time when one travels at the rate of sixty miles an hour. He picks up his valise.

"Come, Avis—Larry!"

The conductor has waited. When the detective first appeared on the scene he was filled with considerable apprehension regarding the outcome of the affair, but now his face fairly beams with satisfaction at witnessing the neat manner in which Doctor Jack has manipulated matters and baffled the intentions of his foes.

They pass around several trains and come upon the special—an engine and Pullman sleeper. Everything seems in readiness for an immediate start.

It takes them just about a minute to enter the car—the conductors exchange a few sentences. Perhaps their old friend is giving the new man some hints that it may pay him to serve the party whose plethoric pocket-book pays the cost of the special.

Now they move, leave the depot, and start down the track like a bird, with jangling bell and an occasional toot from the whistle.

Larry and Jack shake hands. It does look as though they have the best of the bargain at last.

"Hope our fwiends, the enemy, will enjoy their dinner. If they knew the twuth I wather think it would choke them. Gwreat thing, the telegraph—wonderful what pwogress railroads make—think of us flying across the continent in five days. Give me Yankee ways every day. I wather guess Denver agwees with milord. He may take a notion to settle down there," laughs Larry, but that is where he counts without his host.

CHAPTER XXX.

HARD TO SHAKE OFF.

Apparently all is plain sailing now, and the world looks very bright ahead. When we have won a well-deserved victory, a sense of satisfaction steals over one that gives a very comfortable feeling.

As before, our friends have the car to themselves, with a conductor and porter, the latter also serving in the capacity of steward, for luncheons may be obtained from a fairly well-stocked buffet.

This feeling of security and exultation lasts just one hour with Larry. Then his dream of fancied triumph is rudely shattered, and he realizes that there are others who can plot and plan as well as themselves.

They have just finished a lunch. Avis remains seated in another section, while the gentlemen repair to the smoking compartment. Larry will station himself at the open window, where the smoke of his cigarette may pass out and not destroy the flavor of his companion's cigar.

Jack has already settled himself, and Larry is about due. He waited to secure a package of his favorites from his overcoat.

Presently in comes the dude—the other looks at him in surprise. Larry has, since their leaving Denver, assumed a very important and consequential air, as though fortune has made him the benefactor of the community—the fact that this pretty

scheme originated in his brain gives him something of a right to strut about and appear taller than he really is.

Now, however, this look has suddenly faded. Larry's glory seems to have departed. One could almost compare him to a dog that comes sneaking home with his tail between his legs. There is a woe-begone expression on his peculiar face.

Jack jumps to conclusions.

"Train hustles and swings pretty lively, but I didn't know you were subject to sea-sickness, my boy," says the man of iron nerve.

Larry gives him a reproachful look.

"Jack, dear boy, it's something else," he says.

"Let's see if I can guess it, then. D'ye know, Larry, you looked just that way when the black-eyed Susan in Alexandria gave you the mitten. Now, if we were settled in a city, I'd be inclined to think——"

Larry grins now.

"No woman in the case, I assure you, Jack. The Chilian beauty was left in Fwisco, you know."

"Then, what the duse? You couldn't have received a telegram of any kind?"

A shake of the head in the negative.

"Dinner doesn't agree with you?"

"Jove! it was superb!"

"Ah! now I have it, my boy. You have made a terrible discovery." Larry nods eagerly. "You have been too fast, too impulsive, and consequently run out of ciagrettes. Have a weed?"

Larry holds up a package of the articles that are to his mind a thing of beauty and a joy forever, at which Doctor Jack shrugs his shoulders.

"Then I give it up, Larry."

That means he would like to be enlightened as to the cause of the dude's conduct.

"Look, my dear boy, have you ever seen this article before?"

He holds up a hat—a peculiar hat, with something of the military look about it—a hat which once seen could never be forgotten.

Doctor Jack opens his eyes wider than their habit. He takes the hat in his hand and examines it carefully.

"As sure as I live I remember seeing that hat upon the head of Colonel Garcia, the Chilian. Yes; here is his name on the lining inside. Now, how under the sun could you have worn that hat here and I never noticed it?"

Larry claps it on his head. The chapeau comes down to his ears, and Jack laughs.

"I'd look widiculous, wouldn't I now, with such a head-piece on? Not quite such a fool, dear boy, if I do look it."

"But why did you bring it here?"

"Excuse me, Jack, I deny the soft insinuation; I'm not in the hat business just at pwesent."

"Eh? then who brought it here?" sitting up, with something of sudden interest.

"That's what I want to know, by Jove!"

"Where did you get it?"

"Found it on a seat in the car, or wather hanging on a hook."

Doctor Jack turns his eyes from the military chapeau until they meet Larry's gaze.

He does not seem disturbed in the least. It is not his way to show his feelings, and yet the truth that surges through his brain is of a character that might alarm any one.

"I remember now," he says, slowly, "that when those men passed us Colonel Garcia certainly wore his hat, for he ironically bowed to Avis. Your finding it here proves one thing—those men were not heading for the restaurant."

Larry nods his head wisely.

"That is so," he says.

"They got wind of our plans—knew we had a special here—feared lest their own plans might miscarry, and came here to take advantage of our forethought. Perhaps they sighted us coming through the depot, and beat such a hasty retreat that our colonel forgot his head-gear."

Again Larry wags his head as though he agrees with his companion.

"The question that arises now is one of great importance to us. Did those men in their hasty retreat give up their captured position here, or are they still secreted about the car?"

It is, indeed, a serious thing to decide.

"A queer twick to play on us. Wonder how they bwibed the conductor and porter?" ventures Larry, half to himself.

Doctor Jack sneers as he puts his hand in his pocket, takes out a handful of coins and jingles them together.

"That music will accomplish wonderful things, my boy, astonishing things. Most men have their price. You have only to find out the size of their figure. Remember, I don't say all men, but there is more humbug about this world than appears on the surface. I must say I don't exactly fancy the looks of those who have charge of our car."

"My mind, Jack. The darky is ugly, and the conductor, well, I've seen better men in his line."

"Where could they hide?"

"You know there's a state-room at the other end of the car."

"Is the door shut?"

"Yes, and locked, for I twied to open it when I went that way, meaning to smoke there."

"That settles it. When you see the porter ask him to open it. That the lady would, perhaps, like to use it as a boudoir. We hire the car, and must be entitled to the whole of it."

"There he passes now. I'll twy."

Larry swoops out, with a cigarette between his teeth, and pounces upon the porter, who has just entered his little cubby hole, which might be dubbed both pantry and kitchen.

Presently he returns, with a look of fierce import on his face. There is thunder on "that brow." Surely a storm hovers in the distance.

"It's settled at last!" he says.

"In what way?"

"Porter is vewy sorry—key to the state-room is lost, and he has no means of opening the door."

"The black rascal. It would serve him right, if we tossed him from the car."

At this Larry presses a hand on his abdomen.

"Pway don't, Jack, dear boy. I admit he is a twaitor, but think of the lunch he gave us. We have a good many hours to spend in this car—refwain, I beg of you. If there is any tossing overboard, let it be those chaps in the ladies' boudoir, those uninvited guests who share the benefits of our special twain."

"Larry, you're right. Let the darky go. We must make sure of our game, and then lay a plan to dislodge them."

So, while they sit and smoke they talk over many little schemes, all of which have for an object the confusion of the enemy.

Now and then one of them takes a glance into the car, to see that Avis is comfortable. She seems to be reading a novel and at peace, never dreaming that those who have given them so much trouble are in the same car as herself, and, perhaps, even then watching her back of the drawn curtains screening the plate-glass windows between the car and the state-room.

When Jack later on communicates the startling intelligence to her, she is visibly disturbed. The presence of her husband reassures her. He has ridden over all difficulties thus far, and they are half-way across the continent, so it is fair to presume that he will be able to keep up the good work. Her confidence in Jack is sublime, and he is compelled to put forth the best of his powers in order to merit such faith.

Larry was not born a detective, but he can show some energy in this line when circumstances compel him to adopt it.

Before a great while he joins Doctor Jack and his wife. What he has to tell convinces the doctor that their suspicions are correct.

Larry declares he got a whiff of tobacco smoke at an open window just back of the state-room, which proves the latter place to have gentlemen occupants.

Then, again, by placing his ear close to the partition separating it from the ladies' end of the car he believes he heard the mutter of voices, and even caught a Chilian oath, perhaps, uttered when Colonel Garcia discovered the abominable blunder he

made in leaving his military hat somewhere in the car. By the way, Larry has hung it just where he found it, so as to allay suspicions.

A while later he sees the porter take the hat, put it under his coat, and walk in the direction of the state-room, which fact proves conclusively that he has been in communication with the occupants.

Larry pokes his head a little way out of the window, and watches to see what happens.

He sees enough to prove it all true, for the porter, leaning out, thrusts the military hat in at another opening connected with the locked state-room.

There is no longer any doubt, and they can settle upon the course to be pursued.

Jack is indignant. He has hired this train at heavy expense, and no one to whom he objects has any right to ride on it.

So when he sees the conductor again, he follows him to the smoking compartment.

"A few words with you, my friend," he says.

The man in blue uniform looks uneasy, but takes a seat as Jack motions. Already has the latter analyzed his features—the conductor is not exactly what Larry pictured him, although Jack does not wholly fancy him.

"You understand that I charter this train—that my money pays for the services of every man connected with it?" says Jack.

"Certainly, sir," comes the ready reply.

"Ah! then tell me why you dare to carry other passengers—parties who are intensely disagreeable to me—on this very car!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

WRECKED NEAR PORT.

It would be difficult, indeed, to do justice to the expression that marks Doctor Jack's face when he makes this demand. Men more valiant than the Pullman conductor have felt it before, and cringed. He speaks in a low tone, but there is something in his voice, with the glance from his eyes, that emphasizes the words.

The man turns red in the face. He cannot look Jack in the eye for a minute.

"I am positive you have been deceived by those men. To set you right, my friend, I am going to tell you something of the history of this chase across the continent."

He does so, and as he proceeds the official's face shows a change—eagerness marks it now—he has become decidedly interested.

"And you are Doctor Jack. Well, I never expected to meet you. We all know about your adventures in Spain and Turkey. Yes, you are right, sir, I have been deceived. I could kick myself now for being such a dolt."

"Never mind. Tell me how it came about."

"As simple as apple pie. When the eastern express rolled in we waited for the party who had engaged the special. Up come two gentlemen——"

"One dark and with a military look; the other plainly English?" interrupts Jack.

"Yes. This English fellow tells me a cock-and-

bull story, and like a fool I believe it. He says he is a detective from Scotland Yard, in England, following his man around the world; that you have stolen a million and run away with a duchess. I agreed to conceal them on board, since he said he would pay for the special in case you failed to turn up. Under these circumstances I trust you will pardon my mistake, Doctor Jack, and believe that I acted to the best of my judgment."

What can Jack do but forgive him.

"Then you will act with me, now?"

"With all my heart, sir."

"The first thing to be done, then, is to get rid of these interlopers."

The conductor rises to his feet.

"Stay, what would you do?"

"Stop at the next station, and force them to alight."

The doctor ponders a little.

He is disposed to be lenient, but the knowledge that these men are desperate in their endeavor to ruin him hardens his heart to a degree.

"Wait a while. We will reach some larger town or city at nightfall. That will be time enough to make them walk the plank."

It is a fatal decision, and one he has cause to regret later on, but we are mortal and unable to see into the future.

So it is decided, and the rest of the day slips away. They keep a constant watch upon the state-room, not knowing what tricks the inmates may attempt.

So night again draws near. They are still some hours from the destination of the special. Their progress has been exceedingly rapid, as all regular trains must give way before them.

Just as they finish their supper the train slows up, and they see many lights. Evidently in response to a signal from the conductor the special means to stop a few minutes, as he is subject to orders as well as the official of a regular train.

Now comes the critical moment.

Doctor Jack and Larry prepare themselves for action, if it should be necessary.

Loud voices are heard in the private room, and our friends even catch the "*carajo*" of the Chilian, who takes the new turn of affairs deeply to heart, and would kick against it, if he could.

They leave the car, and the porter has both doors locked, so that it will be impossible for them to return. So it really looks as though Doctor Jack and his party had shaken them off at last, even as Sinbad did his tormentor.

For hours they experience a relief, and look forward to final success.

At St. Louis their special stops. Jack keeps track of the time, and it is the opinion of the conductor—who had redeemed himself in their eyes by his ejecting the intruders—that they will arrive just in good time to make connections with the regular east-bound express.

This peculiar whirl across the continent is rather demoralizing to regular habits, especially when they are racing against time, and have such determined foes at hand; but they are Americans, and can put up with many things that would completely weary out some people.

"Another change," yawns Larry, as he picks up his satchel, for St. Louis has been reached.

"It will soon be over, my dear fellow. In thirty-six hours we ought to be in New York," returns

Jack, laughing—Jack, who never shows signs of weariness, no matter what the difficulties he has to battle with.

"That will only give us time. It's hard to fight against the fates," says Larry, and to look at him one would imagine he has the troubles of the universe on his shoulders.

Thus they again pass outside.

The conductor meets them with a troubled face.

"Hello! What's wrong, now? Has our train gone?" cries Jack, a little taken aback.

"No, no, fully fifteen minutes yet, Doctor Jack; but you made a mistake."

"How so?"

"In not letting me put those men off at the little station in the afternoon."

"Eh? what's this?" exclaims Larry.

"They're here, sir."

"Well, that's odd. How do you account for it?"

The Pullman conductor shakes his head.

"I am in the dark. I examined both platforms several times while we ran, and there were no signs of them."

"By Jove! wode in on top of the car. What a beastly wide to take," remarks the little man.

At this the employee smiles.

"I hardly think that was the case, though it might be possible. There are other ways in which they could have come. For instance, they may have stolen a ride on the cow-catcher of the locomotive, or even entered the engine, deceiving the men just as they did me."

"That is a more plausible theory. How they reached St. Louis would probably form the base of an admirable story; but at present I am more

concerned in considering how I shall gain New York. Will you show us the eastern train, conductor?"

"With pleasure, Doctor Jack. This way, sir."

He acts as if anxious to please. Perhaps he desires to make them forget that he helped their enemies part of the way on the road. The veteran traveler hardly knows what to think. It may be this man has played a double game, and after all remained faithful to the party who first "saw" him with a fat bribe.

It matters little—results are what Jack generally looks for rather than the means employed to reach them—and yet he feels considerable curiosity concerning the way in which milord and his Chilian ally came to town.

It is the same old story over again.

Their telegram has reserved a section, and as the hour is late Avis retires. Jack is unable to say whether his enemies are on board this car or not, as the curtains are all down. He is inclined to believe they are in another coach.

Already they have started, and the agony begins again. When rival lines make up such speedy timetables, their trains are seldom on hand, and no one knows this better than Doctor Jack.

To annihilate the many miles separating them from their next change of base, they must keep up this steady speed, whirling the leagues behind them.

Jack's golden remedy is once more used as a lever to help things along. Though averse to the almost universal habit of tipping, he knows the weakness of human nature, and how the best work can be obtained from a majority of public servants.

Cincinnati is reached on time. That run all through has been a remarkable one. Here a transfer is made. The train from St. Louis has been an extra, carrying a large number of people to some gathering in New York, and there is a special limited waiting in the Pennsylvania to take them to their destination.

When they have left the smoky city on the yellow Ohio, and speed up the Miami Valley, it is about one in the afternoon.

Inquiry gives Doctor Jack some knowledge concerning their expected arrival at Gotham. If all goes well, they will make the run in twenty-one and a half hours. Given twenty-two, and they would reach Jersey City at ten.

"Remember," says Avis, "we change time at Pittsburgh, and go one hour ahead."

"True," says Jack, frowning, "that only leaves an hour to cross the river and reach the office in Wall street; but that is doubly enough. We will take a vehicle at the Courtlandt street exit, and have the Jehu hustle us along. I reckon we'll be there, Larry, my boy, if only no wreck occurs on the road."

"I shall pray we may be delivered from that," declares Avis, solemnly.

This is spoken at the time they sight the dome of the capitol at Columbus. A short stop here, and again they go plunging toward the region of the rising sun.

Night approaches—the last night they expect to spend on the road. It has been a long and exciting race from Valparaiso to New York, and rendered more than ordinarily dangerous on account of the desperate tactics adopted by their rivals. Perhaps

the victory will come at last, and be all the more pleasing because it has been earned.

It is on to Pittsburgh now. The iron city ought to open before them by midnight, yes, even earlier, after which begins the climb over the great Alleghenies. Those who have traveled all over the world, and just crossed the grand Rockies on a special, can see nothing of a forbidding nature in such a task. It is a mere everyday performance.

Long before now Larry has discovered Lord Rackett and the doughty colonel in another car, with their heads together. Probably they are discussing desperate measures that may be used as a last resort, for their case is getting down to a fine point, since New York lies at the end of this jump, and it is only a question of a few hours ere they reach that place.

Up the Alleghenies they pant with two engines, climbing over heights, passing through defiles, and at length reaching the summit. Then down the slope they rush with a whiz and a roar seventy miles an hour. An accident now would annihilate them all. The train is warned, a red light flashes in the cold gray of early morning—there is a bad wreck ahead. Desperate measures are taken to stop the special. The air-brakes, usually so faithful, slip, and with a crash they are into the pile of cars. Doctor Jack turns to shield his wife. The car seems to rise on end, totters, and then rolls down the embankment.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"THE BRAVEST WIFE IN AMERICA."

The scene that ensues beggars description. Fortunately this sleeper is the only car that leaves the road bed, else the calamity would have been much greater. A wreck at night time—who can ever forget the scene—the fearful sounds, the blazing lights from burning freight cars, the hiss of escaping steam, and, above all, the terrible cries of men and women half-crazed with fright or wounds.

Madness is apt to rule under such circumstances as these—even the coolest of men often join in the demoralization.

Doctor Jack can remember endeavoring to throw his arms around Avis, who appears in the aisle just at the second they leave the track—he feels the car upheave like a horse rearing upon his hind legs—then it totters, and turns over.

All is medley and confusion within. Fortunately the lights go out, so that the danger from fire is lessened. They seem to roll over once or twice, and then remain stationary, as though resting in a gully.

If this accident had occurred at one of a thousand other points they have passed in the heart of the Alleghenies, it would have resulted in a frightful loss of life; but like most other affairs that have happened at long intervals on this superb road, fortune has been kind, and apparently selected the best spot for the trouble.

Doctor Jack loses his mind. He is conscious of a fearful wrench and then comes a blank.

It is only a few minutes that he lies thus, and then his senses return. Strangely enough the car in landing has fallen upon its bed, so they stand upon the floor. Such a Bedlam as has broken out around them—every one appears to be shrieking at once. Confusion reigns, for the furniture of the car has been piled up in every conceivable manner.

A little light filters through broken windows here and there. The burning freight cars serve one useful purpose, at least, for although dawn is close at hand it will be an hour at least before old Phœbus rears his glowing orb beyond the valley.

The first thing that occurs to Jack is the thought of his wife. What physical pain he may suffer himself is as nothing to the mental torture that sweeps over him when he fails to hear her voice in reply to his cries.

He is like a tigress robbed of her whelps. A dozen sprained ankles or broken bones could not crush him now. He feels around him, for it is too dark to distinguish anything amid such utter confusion.

At first, he discovers only the medley of things that have been rolled from the berths, but as his eager hands search all around they soon touch a figure lying still and motionless.

It is Avis.

A terrible fear sweeps over him that she is dead. The grim monster comes so easily under such circumstances that Jack has reason to be alarmed.

No one knows what may follow. The fitful flashes of fire, seen through the windows, possibly indicate the beginning of a conflagration that may reduce the Pullman sleeper and all in it to ashes.

Plainly, then, his first duty is to seek the open air as speedily as possible. He knows it is improbable that he can gain either door through such a mass of *debris*. Men are scrambling all around him, bellowing lustily either with pain or fright.

Doctor Jack turns to the window of his section. It has become jammed, though neither of the two panes of the double window appear to be broken.

One kick from his uninjured foot sends the glass flying. He follows it with several more to remove the smaller pieces. Then making a hurried investigation, he starts upon the task of getting himself and Avis through.

The first part of this job is easily performed in spite of the pain that comes from his limb, but it is much more difficult to rescue his wife. Once again Doctor Jack has cause to thank Heaven for the wonderful power of his arms, which enable him to accomplish so much. He exerts himself as though he has the strength of a dozen men, and presently carries the still form of the woman he loves to a smooth place.

Tenderly he lays her down, and with a fierce eagerness bends over to chafe her hands, her face—to call her name, as though the sound of his voice might arouse her from this stupor which he prays may not be death.

Other figures have already appeared from the wrecked car. Some spring up the bank, others crawl painfully, while a few men remain to assist the unfortunates still within.

Doctor Jack notices them not. Just at present he has eyes and ears for only one person, and she lies there before him so deathly still, that his very heart is for once almost frozen with horror.

The sound of running water strikes his ear. It is singular how he hears it with such a racket going on around. A stream that presently empties into the Susquehanna is near by. He leaves Avis for one minute, and with great bounds and acute pain reaches the edge of the water. What to carry it in is the next question, but necessity is always the mother of invention. He wears a traveling cap, and it has remained on his head through all this commotion. Snatching it off he fills it with water from the stream, then turns and hobbles back to where he left Avis, suppressing his groans, for his twisted limb pains frightfully.

He reaches the spot, to find it deserted. Surely here was where he laid her, and yet he may be mistaken. Filled with new fears, he turns this way and that. Others lie upon the ground, groaning with pain, but who could have taken Avis.

In that moment of horror it flashes upon him that Lord Rackett was in another car. Could the Englishman be base enough to carry her off under such circumstances?

He is still raging around, almost out of his mind, with pain and mental agony, when a hand clutches his arm. Turning, he looks into the face of the man he has hated.

"Doctor Jack, come with me. I found your wife senseless on the hill-side, where, perhaps, you laid her, and I carried her to one of the cars above. This is no time for us to be at each other's throats. I have hated you, man, but when her life is in danger, even that is forgotten. Come! What! you are badly hurt. Take my arm, Evans."

A singular sight truly, to see this British lion helping the man he has fought up the hill, yes, as

tenderly as though it might have been his brother. At any rate, it proves Lord Rackett to have some good in him beneath the reckless exterior, and this calamity with its attendant horrors has stirred the fountain to its depths.

When they reach Avis they find her sitting up and looking around in a dazed way. A lady traveler, having a bottle of strong smelling-salts, has been able to bring her to.

Jack forgets all else in his delight at seeing her alive and uninjured. He closes his arms around her, starts to speak, gives a groan, and almost swoons again from the intense pain.

His wife in this emergency becomes her old brave self again.

"Where are you hurt, Jack?" she exclaims.

He manages to point to his left ankle, which is very much swollen, so that he will not be able to set that foot on the ground again for a week or two, smiles bravely and begins to say it is not much; but Avis sees what a grave sprain he has received, unlaces his shoe, which he had on at the time of the accident, and sends Lord Rackett scurrying for water in a bucket which the porter brings to view.

"By Jove!" says a familiar voice.

It is Larry.

A remarkable sight the usually natty dude appears. His raiment is torn, one eye blacked, and he seems to have become mixed up in the cook's galley in some way, for a can of powdered sugar or flour is sprinkled over his figure from head to foot.

One arm hangs limp and motionless at his side, and Larry's face has a look of pain upon it, quite foreign there.

"Thank Heaven you are alive. A beastly affair this, I declare. Are you badly hurt, Jack, dear boy?" rattles off the little man, punctuating his sentences with grimaces that proclaim his own acute suffering.

"A sprained ankle, only—I was lucky," sings out Doctor Jack, as though it is a mere bagatelle.

"That's bad. I can see from the looks that you will not get to New York by noon."

Jack starts up and groans dismally.

"I must, if I move Heaven and earth to accomplish it. My whole fortune is at stake. And yet—great powers, what pain shoots up my leg when I move. They might as well kill me on the move—I will get there!"

"Let me go," says Larry, faintly, and Avis, looking at him, sees how pale he is.

She immediately makes him sit down.

"Neither of you can go. If the packet I carry reaches Wall street by noon to-day it is Doctor Jack's wife who will carry it."

Her lord and master attempts to expostulate, but she places a little hand over his mouth.

"I am the captain, now. You have a severe sprain, poor Larry, a broken arm. You must remain and be taken care of, if there are doctors on the train, as I hope will be the case. Here comes the conductor. I believe he is looking for you."

It proves to be the truth. The conductor has taken the greatest interest in Doctor Jack.

As he comes up, he says:

"There is a chance for one of you to reach Harrisburg; we are about to send the engine—which remained on the track—for assistance and doctors—it will start right away. Will you go, Doctor Jack?"

He groans dismally—tries to rise, but is pushed back in the seat by gentle hands.

"I will go, conductor."

"You, madam—on the engine——"

"Certainly. I must reach Harrisburg in order to make connections for New York. I am ready to undertake it," she says, bravely.

He looks at her admiringly.

"Ah! Doctor Jack, I can see the secret of some of your success at least. But time presses. I will be back in a minute to take you to the engine, madam."

Jack kisses her good-by. Sad though the parting is, how he blesses Heaven for giving him such a wife.

"You have the packet safe, dear?" he asks.

"Yes, yes; it is sewed in my dress."

"And the little revolver?"

"I still possess—do not fear—if steam will do its duty and fortune is kind, your Avis reaches Wall street by noon."

"And you know what to do?"

"Everything, as you have spoken about it so often, Jack."

"Then good-by, and Heaven guard you for the bravest wife in America."

"A beastly shame to think I have to sit here and nurse an awm while Avis goes on such an errand," groans Larry, but she gives him an entrancing smile, and turning accompanies the conductor from the sleeper.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FLIGHT OF THE WILD-CAT ENGINE.

Never in all his life did Doctor Jack witness the departure of his brave wife with stronger conflicting emotions than on the present occasion. Tempted to bid her remain, he is also aware that his future fortune depends upon her reaching New York by noon on November fourth. They have done well thus far, but all will be lost unless this matter is attended to. So he groans and hides his face, and when he looks again Avis has gone, only Larry remaining at his side. Larry, who endures the pain of his broken left arm with the grim heroism of a martyr.

Meanwhile, since it is Avis who carries the precious packet, it is eminently proper that we follow her in the brave endeavor she makes to mold circumstances.

The conductor leads her to where the engine awaits them. In the gray dawn the scene is most distressing, for the wreck presents an aspect of ruin, though in reality it is the freight that makes most of the *debris*, the cars of the lightning express being simply derailed, blocking all tracks.

No one has been killed, so far as known, but many are injured. It is strange that an engine is clear of the wreck, but so it happens. This is the locomotive about to be sent to Harrisburg for assistance, running about on the time of the express.

The conductor speaks a few sentences to those on

board the huge engine, and the hearty voice of the driver is heard.

"Make way here, boys, for Doctor Jack's wife. It isn't a pleasant ride for a lady, but since she must reach Harrisburg, we'll take her there."

Thus the works of Jack Evans bear fruit. He is known to this engineer by reputation. What he has done abroad to win his wife has not been hidden under a bushel.

Avis is helped aboard, and given a seat beside the fireman, who has one arm in a rude sling, as though he received some damage in the wreck.

They are off!

The great iron engine rushes down the track like a monster of life. To Avis it is a new and decidedly novel sensation. Under other circumstances she might experience something of alarm, but now as they seem to fairly leap forward through space, the only feeling she has is one of exultation at the thought of annihilating distance. Every mile which they leave behind brings her so much closer to New York.

She sits there, holding on firmly, for the engine jumps and rocks until it seems to be almost on the point of turning over. That wild ride Avis Evans will never forget so long as she lives.

Behind her she has left suffering and misery. In front lies her mission, a sacred duty that she has vowed to perform. The thought of her husband and all that success or failure means to him buoys her heart up. Were the dangers of her venturesome journey twice as numerous, yet would she proceed.

As the morning draws on apace and darkness disappears she can see the wide Susquehanna on her left. The air is frosty, and yet in the engine

cab, with the windows closed, it is very comfortable.

Avis looks around. Up to this time she has been wholly engrossed with her thoughts, while her gaze has been fastened outside.

She discovers that she is not the only passenger who goes to Harrisburg by special engine. Several men are aboard, and her eyes fall upon one after another with a somewhat uneasy feeling.

The first face she sees is the red one of Lord Rackett, who bows and smiles, yet does not come to speak to her.

Beside him is Colonel Garcia, the agent of the syndicate, against whom Doctor Jack has pitted himself. Two others are present, and Avis conceives a suspicion that, judging from their black looks and general appearance, they are Chilians. This surprises her, because Jack has felt confident that all their enemies, save the Briton and the South American colonel, had been left far behind in the mad race against time.

The more she watches these men the stronger becomes her belief that there has been some miscalculation made. She sees Garcia look at her closely, and speak to one of these men who, in turn, probably communicates the intelligence to his companion.

Doctor Jack's wife is quick to recognize the gravity of the situation. She carries on her person documents that it would be worth a million dollars to the syndicate these men represent, could they secure them. That is what Colonel Garcia, the unscrupulous Chilian, has come thousands of miles to accomplish—that is why he is here.

Four men against one frail woman. It looks as

though the packet might be in greater danger now than ever before.

Doctor Jack's wife carries on her person, however, an antidote for this evil. She is armed, and her husband has taught her how to use a revolver in an emergency. With one hand she holds to the rail. The other is lost amid the folds of her dress.

Thus they plunge on toward Harrisburg. Every mile left behind lessens the danger she feels hovering over her. It seems to nerve the men who plot against her to desperation.

Their progress is such that in less than an hour they will cross the long bridge spanning the Susquehanna, and enter the capital. Whatever is to be done must be accomplished speedily.

Avis knows a crisis is near. She sees one of the Chilians move up until he is just behind the engineer. The second fellow is talking with the fireman. Lord Rackett holds back as though he would have nothing to do with the matter, having washed his hands of it at the time of the wreck. Hence, it devolves upon Garcia to take the leading part.

The warning whistle sounds very often as they sweep down the grade like a whirlwind. Men rush to the doors of cottages, nestled under the hill sides, to gaze in wonder at the remarkably swift passage of the wild-cat engine. They do not understand what it means, for, of course, no news of the wreck has as yet been sent along the line.

When the Chilian colonel crosses to where Avis sits, she knows the time has come. He will demand the packet, and threaten violence in case it is refused. As he has apparently the power at hand to carry out his words, it looks as though triumph might at last come to his banner.

He counts without taking one thing into reckoning, and this the fact that the woman he intends to rob is Doctor Jack's wife. Long association with that daring man has given Avis some of his spirit.

Now Garcia is in front of her. Upon his face can be seen a mocking smile, and back of this the strong passions he strives to control.

"Senora, you see that fortune has placed you in my hands. I control this engine. You carry something I have come from Valparaiso to secure. I must possess it. Avoid trouble, then, and hand it over to me. I will give you my word to leave you at once."

This is what he says, in what he imagines is a tone of authority. He may be accustomed to seeing his soldiers jump and tremble at his words, his frown, but now he deals with one who has long since set him down at his true value.

Doctor Jack's wife looks him squarely in the eyes, and then, strange to say, laughs. She has little fear of this fellow.

"I prefer to retain what belongs to me, Colonel Garcia. Your interest is no doubt to your credit, but I refuse to consider a request that savors of robbery."

He begins to realize that the victory may not be so easily won, since a stumbling-block has already arisen in his path. The frown on his face deepens. He actually looks fierce enough to scare a Turk.

"Senora, no trifling. I would not like to lay a hand on you, but that packet I must have at any price. It is worth much to me."

"And more to Doctor Jack. I gave him my word—I will keep it," she replies.

"See, I control this flying monster. At my word,

cospita, it stands still. You, too, are in my power. For the last time, lovely senora, will you hand me the packet?"

"If I refuse?"

"Then, much as I regret it, I shall use force to take it from you. Doctor Jack taught you to be wise. He would not have you defy a man who can be a devil when aroused."

"He taught me how to use—this!"

The Chilian colonel starts back as the hand of Doctor Jack's wife suddenly swings a deadly toy under his very nose. His horrified eyes instantly discover that it is in a condition to go off at any second, and when a woman's finger plays with the trigger there is no telling what accident may happen.

"Hold, senora!" he exclaims, endeavoring to dodge, as though he fears lest he may be sent suddenly upon a long journey.

Another element enters the game at this point, and brings about a change. The engineer, leaving his throttle, has with one blow of his grimy fist sent the man back of him sprawling among the coal. He has heard the bold Garcia's words about owning the engine, and now sets about proving him a false prophet.

One step takes him to the side of the Chilian, whom he seizes and shakes as a terrier might a rat. The insulting manner of the colonel has aroused all the stalwart engineer's anger.

"Talk to a lady like that, will you—I've got a wife as well as Doctor Jack, and I feel like you'd insulted her as well, you miserable dog."

More shakes follow, and Lord Rackett, who is seated on the tender, feebly claps his hands, and

exclaims: "Bravo, bravo!" for something he has taken to steady his nerves appears to have gone to his head.

"You are a Chilian officer, eh?" continues the engineer. "Well, I don't wonder they had a revolution down there if many like you are to be found. There's only one thing to be done with such vermin. Run this machine, do you? Order it stopped when you please, eh? Bah! good-by to you, colonel."

The engineer gives the Chilian a whirl and a toss, and actually throws him out of the cab. Avis holds her breath until she sees Garcia alight with a tremendous splash in a large pool of water that, lying alongside the track, has caught the driver's eye.

Looking back as they go whirling down the steel rails, they are able to see the wretched colonel scramble to his feet and stand waist deep in the duck pond. Then a sudden bend shuts out the view. The engineer's hand is on the throttle, and a long whistle for the bridge pierces the morning air.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HOW THE LONG RACE WAS WON.

Across the great bridge they roll, then the pace quickens again until finally Harrisburg is reached. Avis is in suspense, not knowing what fate awaits her.

She thanks the engineer for his friendly assistance. People stare to see a lady leave the locomotive; but she has no time to notice these things now.

Her eyes seek an official, and toward him she hastens.

Inquiry develops the fact that the next train leaves for Philadelphia and New York in half an hour. She regrets the delay, but at least it gives her time for an early breakfast.

Avis consults her watch frequently. She has set it an hour ahead, knowing that the time changed at Pittsburgh. There is time to reach New York, but nothing to spare.

When the train hauls out she breathes a sigh of relief. To be moving means a great deal.

On another track she sees the wrecking train hurrying off to the scene of disaster. It takes her thoughts to Jack. How he must be suffering both mentally and physically during these hours, roundly abusing the cruel fate that prevents him from finishing the good work.

Avis smiles. He has a trusty messenger, she believes, and if the train will only reach its destina-

tion at Jersey City on time, Doctor Jack's wife will do the rest.

She has a time-table, and consults it whenever they arrive at a station. Who has more interest in the journey than this brave little woman, coming thousands of miles by sea and land, encountering and conquering dangers at the side of her husband, in order to be in New York at a certain hour?

It is a long, weary ride—one always feels the final portion of a journey the most.

Philadelphia at last. Thank Heaven, and very close to time.

Two hours and a half ought to see her in New York. For Jack's sake more than her own she is glad. He will be so proud of her.

Why do they not start again—precious minutes are being lost. Each pulsation of the heart for the next few hours may mean dollars—a million is the stake played for.

When Avis, more nervous than ever before in all her life, is reaching a point when the situation becomes almost unbearable, she sees the conductor, whom she has watched with feverish eagerness, wave his arms. Thank Heaven! they are about to start.

At a snail's pace, it seems to her, they creep out of Philadelphia. Once the City of Brotherly Love is left behind their pace is more rapid, and at length the maximum is reached when trees and houses seem to fly past.

Avis sits counting the minutes. At Trenton they have made up eight, and it begins to look as though, after all, they may yet get in on time. If the man at the throttle knew of her mission, and sympa-

thized with her, he could hardly have carried the train on more nobly.

Every fiber of her being thrills with excitement as the long race against time draws near a close. It is like a well-balanced scale—a very small thing will send it up or down, but the result is freighted with enormous results to a few.

If anything they increase their speed. The track is in elegant condition, and the man in the cab has the reputation for the best time made on an American railway. Thus the fates work for the brave and the fair.

Through New Brunswick they pass like a streak of light. It is about half-past ten. Then comes a stretch of country, after which Elizabeth shows up. Their speed is checked in crossing the Reading tracks, after which they race for Newark and pass through with no delay.

Another burst of speed over the meadows, a rush through the cut, and presently they dash upon the elevated tracks into Jersey City.

Avis is ready to leave the train as soon as it stops. The time is so short she feels her heart flutter with deep anxiety. To lose even one boat may ruin all.

This does not happen, and she presently finds herself crossing the North River. New York, her goal, lies there in the sunlight, which gilds its domes and spires. When she issues forth from the ferry-house it is just ten minutes to twelve.

A hackman holds the door of his vehicle open.

“Carriage, madam?”

A glance shows a stout animal and a driver who seems to possess determination.

“Ten dollars if you reach Wall street before

noon," says this energetic little woman, as she disappears within the vehicle.

Slam goes the door shut. With one bound the energetic Jehu gains his seat, and whirls his horses around. Ten dollars! the fee is worth striving for.

"Make way—case of life and death!" he bawls, plying his whip.

Once over West street to Courtlandt he has overcome the heaviest difficulty. Still he urges his horses on at a gallop. Obstacles appear, but a veteran hackman is an adept at avoiding them. Now, they are in Liberty street, and nearing its junction with Broadway. Avis looks out. A jam would ruin her hopes, but such a thing seldom occurs so far down, the congestion of wagons being from the Post Office, north.

Broadway at last. Avis breathes in relief, for her mission is a success.

Just as they turn into Wall street the time-ball, on the Western Union building, drops. It is high noon, and bells and whistles proclaim the fact.

In a certain office in Wall street a number of gentlemen have congregated. Their appearance would indicate men of business standing and wealth. Thousands like them can be met with any day in this section, where meetings are being held that involve the handling of millions.

Most of them appear very anxious, and consult their watches frequently.

At the first stroke of the bells announcing the mid-day hour, one of them rises and raps on a desk with his knuckles.

"Gentlemen, it is time to take a vote. We will decide the destinies of our company. Is there any objection?"

One man springs up.

"I have had a telegram from Doctor Evans."

"Ah!"

"He is on the way from Chili with documents that give him the right to vote the shares of Judge Frazer, which, added to his own, makes a majority of the stock."

The other gentlemen smile.

"Where is Doctor Jack Evans? Let him produce these documents, and we submit. But if he is not here, we must shape the future policy of the nitrate company we represent."

"He left Cincinnati at noon yesterday."

"On what road?"

"The Pennsylvania."

The smile grows broader now.

"Ah! fate was too much for him—that train was delayed by an accident in the mountains, so I learn from the bulletins. Gentlemen, we will go on with the voting. It is all in our hands, since Doctor Jack is not here."

The door has opened, even while he speaks, and a figure steps in. The figure of a woman, whose handsome face glows with eagerness.

"Madam," says the chairman of the meeting, in haste, "you have mistaken the room; the next door leads to the divorce lawyer's office."

She steps forward.

"Is this the stockholders' meeting of the Rising Sun Nitrate Company, limited?" she asks, very distinctly.

"Yes."

The one member who had plead for delay jumps to his feet eagerly.

"Is Jeremiah Green present?"

"I am that party," he exclaims.

The lady has something in her hand.

"I am requested to give this to you. My husband is unable to be here. I represent him."

"Madam," says the chairman, now almost ready to collapse. "Madam, who are you?"

She gives him a radiant smile.

"I am Doctor Jack's wife."

Jeremiah Green gives a half-suppressed cheer as he tears the cover from the packet, glances at the contents and waves them above his head.

"These certificates are in Doctor Jack's name. They have been bought outright, giving him a majority of the stock. Gentlemen, your reign is over. Henceforth this company will be worked in the true interest of all holders. British holders must follow Yankee push, for Doctor Jack has won."

The defeated conspirators who have intended freezing the minority out, and ruining Doctor Jack, now admit that they are beaten, and beg for the best terms they can get. Avis, now that the crisis has passed, and success won, sinks into a chair quite wearied.

The meeting is soon adjourned to await the pleasure of the man who now controls the company. Jeremiah Green sees Avis to the Astor House. The first thing she does is to send a message to Harrisburg, directed to the hotel where Jack meant to stop. It simply says in the language of old:

"Veni, vidi, vici—I came, I saw, I conquered."

Doctor Jack, seated in his room, with his limb bandaged, and not yet able to travel, receives this cheering message, and a tremendous load is at once lifted from his heart, for he knows Avis reached Wall street in time.

The next day he manages to travel to Gotham, and the Astor House, assisted by Larry, and it may be set down as certain that a warm welcome awaits the suffering heroes.

Kirke Smith also turns up.

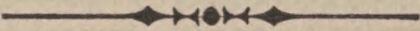
The Chilians, Colonel Garcia and all, have vanished from view after the complete failure of their plans. As for Lord Rackett, his recent experience has taught him that it is dangerous business trying to steal other men's wives, especially foolish, since so many fair English girls would jump at the chance of securing him; so he shakes the dust of America from his feet, and sails for home. No one mourns his absence.

Doctor Jack's sprain grows better daily, and at length he calls a meeting of the company from which he has refused to be thrown, and which is now under his thumb. The British interests and those of Chilians must be henceforth guided by his wishes; but as he has his fortune invested they must either follow in his lead or buy him out. This latter occurs, for Doctor Jack is willing to sell at a profit, especially since at the time there seems danger of war between the United States and the republic of Chili.

Larry, who has invested heavily, shares in the profits, which allow him another year of idleness on the Continent, so he starts for Italy as soon as his arm heals. Kirke Smith accompanies Doctor Jack and his wife to Egypt, a country he has long desired to visit, and they spend some months on an elegant *dahabieh* on the Nile until the approach of hot weather drives them to more congenial Paris.

[THE END.]

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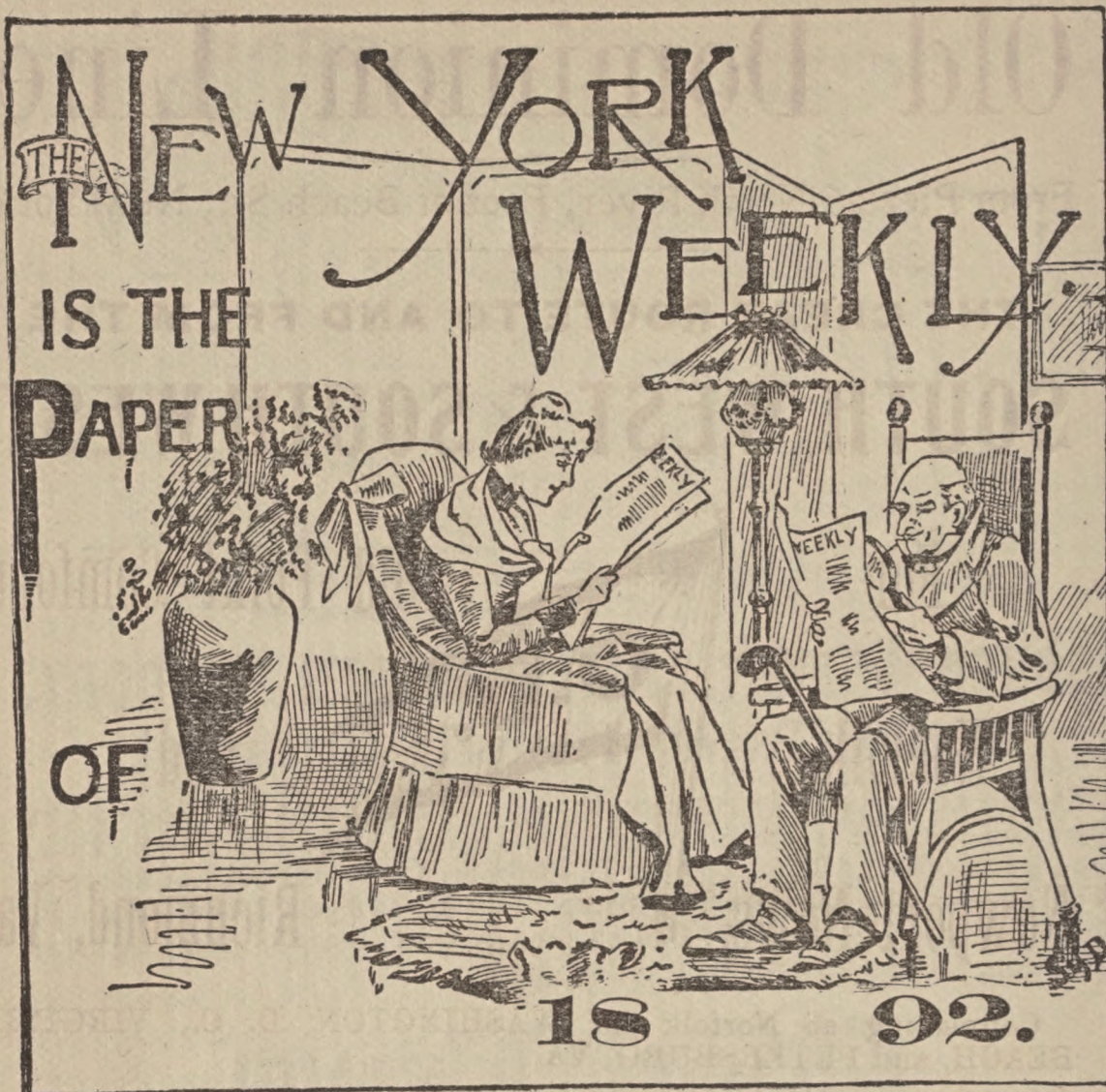
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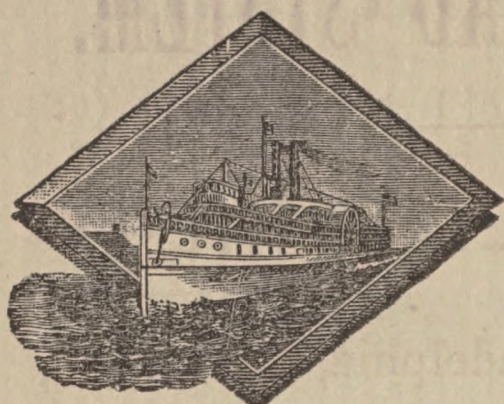
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